

By the same Author

BETWEEN THE ACTS

LADYSMITH

A MODERN SLAVERY

THE DARDANELLES CAMPAIGN

ESSAYS IN FREEDOM

ESSAYS IN REBELLION

Lines of Life (verse)

CHANGES AND CHANCES (3 vols.)

ENGLAND'S VOICE OF FREEDOM

ROUGH ISLANDERS

GOETHE: MAN AND POET

IN THE DARK BACKWARD

FIRE OF LIFE (abridgment of CHANGES AND CHANCES)

Other works: see Preface

RUNNING ACCOMPANIMENTS

BY
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PREFACE

VARIOUS events in my life, which has now been longer than the average, have been narrated in such books of mine as *Neighbours of Ours*, *In the Valley of Tophet*, *The Plea of Pan*, *Between the Acts*, *The Thirty Days' War*, *The Siege of Ladysmith*, *The Dawn in Russia*, *The New Spirit in India*, *The Dardanelles Campaign*, *In the Dark Backward*, *Changes and Chances* (three volumes lately abbreviated by Mr Ellis Roberts into one volume called *Fire of Life*), and a few volumes of Essays. The present book contains some of the reflections and observations that have come to me in the course of these events or in later recollections of them. One or two of the chapters are partly historical. Of the personal thoughts and emotions that have swarmed over my mind in the various years, I have as a rule mentioned only such as might have occurred to anyone placed in situations similar to mine, and I have seldom attempted to discuss those vital religious and philosophical questions which often lead into controversial perplexities beyond my power of solution. As in life, I have done no more than try to follow reason's revolving light, now shining, now obscured, as the only practical guide across the straits of our brief and uncertain existence.

H.W.N.

London, 1936.

CONTENTS

	PAGES
PREFACE	V
 I CONVERSATION PIECES	 I-14
Provincial Life—An Evangelical Family—A Christian Soul—Worship of the Bible—Dis- tress at Biblical Criticism—Struggle for Faith —My Sister's Perplexities.	
 II A MASTER	 15-29
Unhappiness at Failure in Oxford Exam.— "A Second"—My Master, Arthur Herman Gilkes—Conversation with—My possible Qualifications—Gilkes on Future Studies— And Religious Questions—His Subsequent Letters to me—Stayed with him at Church Stretton—Service under him at Shrewsbury School—Subsequent Correspondence and Meetings—His Service in the Church—His admiration of my Reports from the Front— Tribute to his Memory.	
 III SOMETHING TO SAY	 30
A Hospital Nurse's Difficulty—Shared with Plato and Tennyson.	
 IV GREEKS	 31-43
Advance and Retreat in Epirus—Burial of Greek Soldiers—Address of General Manos —Loss of the Men by Day—Comparison with Funeral Oration of Pericles—Glory of Athens —True Patriotism—Pericles on Athenian Life —Qualities of Modern Greeks.	
 V THE DERIDED AGE	 44-55
Funeral of the Great Queen—March of my Cadets to East End—Review of Victorian Age—Protests of Working People—Horrible Condition of Workers—Leaders of Revolt— Change in Thought during the 'Eighties— Victorian Age as Age of Revolution.	

	PAGES
VI CRABBÈD YOUTH	56-66
Mistake of being Born too Soon—Possible Drastic Changes—Envy of Modern Youth—As in Dress, Comradeship of the Sexes—Natural Instinct to destroy Age—Revolt from Custom—Alleged Moral Carelessness—Its Increase Dubious—Apparent Reduction of Prostitution—Reaction of Age—My Father's Diffidence towards Undergraduates—An Unfortunate Meeting in Christ Church.	
VII NOAH'S RAVEN	67
How the Raven lived during Flight—Parallel with Types of Literary Men.	
VIII TWO PICTURES	68-75
Oxford Cant on Botticelli—Description of his picture, Mars and Venus—Significant Expression on Face of Venus—Parallel with <i>Les Foins</i> by Bastien-Lepage—French Peasants in Hayfield—Significance of Woman's Attitude and Expression.	
IX THE FOOL'S PARADISE	76-96
Envy of Greek Myths—And of Italian—Pleasant Surprises in Mediæval Life—Surviving Mythology—Ecclesiastical Myths—Resulting Horrors—Advantages of Ritual—Services of Religion—Fools' Paradises in Ideals of Films—The Stoics—Is Reason a Comfort?—Psychology or Reason—Moments of Ecstasy—Quotation from C. E. Montague—And Wordsworth—Speculations of Spiritualism—Aristotle on Happiness, how far possible—Remaining Opportunities for Ecstasy.	
X NEW DEVILS	97-98
Quotation from Samuel Butler—Happiness of Devils cast out—Greater Happiness of Devils returning to House swept and garished.	
XI WONDERS	99-110
Wonder of retaining so many words—Greater wonder that so many disappear and emerge later without apparent cause—Fear	

of Ghosts even benign—Chance of Man's Disappearance on a "Nova Stella"—Wonder of Rivers' Purification—Wonder of Reproduction—Answer of Moslem Sheikh to Layard—Wonder of Man's Virtue—And of Digestion—Wonder of a French *Gourmet*—Wonder of the Pituitary Gland—How can it effect the myriad differences in Man?

XII AN ENGLISH REVOLUTIONARY III-127

Memorial Service to Galsworthy—End of the English Gentleman's Age—Galsworthy commonly regarded as Type—Description of Typical "Gentleman"—Education and assumed Qualities—Foundation of Greek Restraint—Instance of Galsworthy's Modesty—As in his Novels and Plays—Confucian Creed—Need of Property—Capek's Account—Galsworthy's Ignorance of Workers in spite of Sympathy—Paradox of calling him Revolutionist—But Satire against His Class almost universal in Writings—His terrible Picture of Revolution in posthumous Work—Which he calls the Execution of his Generation.

XIII A STAGE ARMY I28-I40

Charity in Russian Cottage—Comparison with Samians' Appeal to Sparta—English Anxiety to Help—Benevolent Societies—Numerous Appeals—Sydney Smith's Complaint—"The Stage Army of the Good"—Matthew Arnold's Satire—Description of the "Army" and its Objects—Difficulty of Maintaining its Enthusiasm—Change under imagined Distribution—Past services of "Army"—Ideal of the "Happy Warrior".

XIV THWARTED I41

The Vineyard not kept—Comparison with Modern Journalists and Musicians.

XV ROMANCE I42-I47

Errors of Keats in beautiful lines on Ruth—Difference of Biblical Story—Tendency of Writers to add Romance to History—A Lie adds Pleasure—"Confidence felt only in the Dead"—General Tendency to beautify the Past, as in Romance.

	PAGES
XVI MIND SPONTANEOUS	148-151
Music in the Head—How possible in Silence ? —Brilliant Colours in Total Darkness— Uncalled-for appearance of Places—Not a Mirage.	
XVII DOUBLE PERSONALITY	152-154
Sense of being two different People—In- stances from Poets and Painters—Self- Double—Terrible Revelation of Skull Interior.	
XVIII BODY AND MIND	155-157
Blinded Senses—How far Body may Reflect Mind.	
XIX RHYTHMS	158-173
Origin of Word—Various Meanings derived —The Drum—Instances of Rhythm in Marching—Dancing, especially Folk-Dancing —Movement of the Heart and of Waterfalls— Rhythmic Effect of Pauses—Too great Regu- larity—Escape by breaking Rhythm— Instances in Poetry and Music—Parallel Movements in Sonatas and in Poetry—And Folk Dances—Prose Rhythm in Swift— Modern Rhythm in Music and Poetry still undiscovered by Me—Rhythm in Life also discovered by Greeks.	
XX THE GADFLY OF FREEDOM	174-201
Walk with Masfield on the Chilterns—His Stern Training in Activity— <i>The Everlasting Mercy</i> —Great Hampden Church—Accus- tomed Service—Inscription on Tomb of Hampden's Wife—Her disturbed Existence —Clarendon's Account of Hampden—His Passion for Freedom—Summary of Events up to Civil War—Service for Peace in House of Commons—Comparison with Falkland— Hampden's Second Marriage—Removal to London—Uniforms in Parliamentary Army —Cromwell's Warning to him at Edgehill— "Would never sheathe the Sword"—Com- mon Reverence for Monarch—Service under Essex—His disastrous Lethargy—Hamp- den's Design to Trap Rupert at Chiselham- pton—Thwarted by Sloth of Essex—Wounded at Chalgrove—Died at Thame—Funeral at	

CONTENTS

xi

PAGES

Hampden Church—Unknown Grave—Masefield and I listen to Sermon on Duty of Passive Obedience—The Patriot's Bones stirring under my Feet prove exact spot of Grave—Note on Hampden's Uniform.

XXI BEAUTY NO COMFORT 202-203

Thought of Man's Cruelty destroyed Wordsworth's Pleasure in Nature—Lassalle's Lover found no Consolation in Swiss Scenery—Great Beauty and Interest of View over Dardanelles did not console me for the Horror of War viewed from the *River Clyde*.

XXII THE HOLY SPIRIT 204-226

Anthem in Chester Cathedral—Petition that the holy spirit be not removed—Illustrations of its loss by Coleridge—Perhaps by Browning—Case of Goethe and Swinburne—Fate of Hannibal—Heine as Knight of the Holy Spirit—Indignation as Evidence in Swift, Carlyle, Ruskin, Bernard Shaw—Petition for Purity of Heart—Instances—"Retreats"—Wordsworth's Apprehension—Expansion of Petition—Terror of its loss.

XXIII DEATH'S LOSSES 227-235

Carlyle's Sorrow at seeing Stars no more—Personal Losses—Past Pleasures—Love of Mountains—Improbable Reasons—Other Joys to be left—Union of great Arts with one's self—Regrettable Losses few—Frederick the Great's Soldiers' Hatred of Death.

XXIV COLOPHON 236-247

Meaning of Colophon—Goethe's Contentment at Death's Prospect—H. G. Wells on future "Gigantic Clearance"—Pisgah-Sights—Man's Objection to "Gigantic Clearances"—Among Poor and Rich Alike—Dubious Welcome in England to abstract "Planning"—"The Stalk of English Juice"—Browning's Regret at not entering Promised Land—Return to Aristotle's Definition of Happiness—How far fulfilled—Motto of Colophon.

INDEX 249

CONVERSATION PIECES

ON Sunday afternoons in our home at Leicester, after the mid-day dinner upon roast leg of mutton, or roast sirloin of beef on alternate weeks, we three boys set out for the habitual Sunday walk with our father. We usually went along the Knighton lane, now entirely built up ; or along the canal to the Echo Bridge on the way to Aylestone, where the parson kept a few noble bloodhounds whose moaning roars and eyes deep-set in blood-red sockets reminded us of stories about runaway slaves ; or up the Occupation Road leading cheerfully between the madhouse, the cemetery and the prison, beyond which one came to " Hangman's Lane ", still marked by the deep hole where the gallows had once stood, hanging a murderer who had rotted there in chains. Or we walked right across the town to the spacious grounds of a Queen Anne mansion, set in glorious fruit and vegetable gardens, with open fields for hay-making when June came.

The owner was reputed the richest man in the town, owing to his prudence in buying up land in all directions where the town was likely to spread for the growing manufacture of woollens, boots and shoes, and a peculiar stuff

called "elastic web", used for the sides of boots, though the last elastic-sides were soon to disappear as the nickname "Jemimas" brought mockery upon them. And they did disappear before I was full-grown.

When the old gentleman died, leaving his wealth behind him, many pleaded that the whole estate should be handed over to the town, all the more rightfully because it had originally belonged to the Church and the Abbey, in which Cardinal Wolsey died and was buried. But if all the angels of heaven had come down to join in our plea their trumpets and harps would have sounded in vain ; for property was involved, and so the one beautiful place close to the growing town was cut up into tidy little streets of lucrative houses. Some propitiation has, however, been granted to religion by the erection of a tidy little church in the midst of them, to prove that treasure laid up in heaven still has a value.

The discussion between my father and the owner on the position of the Low Church versus High Church parties occupied a theological time, and then we hurried back through the town past the beautiful church of St Mary's, which had been our own pew-rented church until the parson put the choir into white surplices like any Papist satellites. Then indeed, one morning, the whole of our family marched out after the Creed and we saw that beautiful and ancient church no more. On our Sunday walks, passing through the almost sacred precincts of

the Newark, which included the barracks and a vast Norman fortress gate still dedicated to national defence, we just reached home for tea before hurrying out again for Evening Service. That was held in a neighbouring church, the most hideous then existing. For, though my father was an artist at heart, and devotedly researched antiquity from the Roman occupation down to the Puseyite invasion, he insisted upon a black gown in the pulpit, a choir of men and women dressed like ordinary townspeople, the reading of the Psalms in alternate verses, the repetition of the Creed with the faces of clergy turned away from the altar, a stiffened back rather than a bow at the name of Jesus, and a Communion service as nearly as possible like a family meal. He felt no objection to pews or pew rents. What place of worship he could now have attended cannot be surmised, for he would never have joined the Nonconformists, but concealed a secret admiration for their fighting qualities ranged against Rome during the Civil War, though he was a resolute Royalist himself.

We returned from Evening Service happy and hungry, as I have seldom felt since. Supper was good and varied, and a whole week must pass before Sunday came again. Still to keep the memory of Sunday with us we settled down in a circle before a well-built organ in the drawing-room—a real organ, not a harmonium on which the Nonconformists exercised their

idea of sacred music, while we were, after all, Church of England, and sprung from a northern stock of small squires. Many of our hymns expressed a longing for death and the celestial regions to which death alone could grant an entrance. "O Paradise! O Paradise!" we sang; "Who doth not long for rest?" when all we longed for was a comfortable bed and a cheerful waking on Monday morning. But there was one hymn that moved me to a daring emendation. The last two lines in the description of heaven for which we longed ran: "Where congregations ne'er break up, And Sabbaths have no end." For "Sabbaths" I substituted "sermons", and the improvement attracted no notice. But another familiar hymn for children began with the verse:

I want to be an angel
And with the angels stand,
A crown upon my forehead,
And a harp within my hand.

One unhappy evening that was too much for me, and I hurriedly ran from the room and tucked myself into bed. When the singing was over, my mother followed and found me.

"Henry," she said, rather sternly, "don't you want to go to heaven and be an angel?"

"No! No! No!" I cried, covering my head in the bedclothes.

"You're a naughty, fractious little boy," she said. "If you don't want to go to heaven

and be an angel, where do you expect to go to ? ” And, having a terrific vision of Hell, I cried ; and to my surprise, my mother cried, too.

Many years afterwards, Arthur Ponsonby (now Lord Ponsonby), who used to come to Massingham's lunch with the *Nation* staff as an occasional visitor, told us that when Queen Alexandra, who was then rather deaf, was kindly visiting the wards in a hospital for the wounded during the war, she said encouragingly to one of the patients : “ How you must long, my poor man, to get quite well and go back to the Front.” And he replied, “ No, no, no, madam ! Never again ! Never again ! ” “ That's what all our brave fellows say ! ” answered the Queen, and passed on to the next cot with comforting words.

Even when all the hymn-singing and praying and Bible-reading were over, the end of my daily religious education had not come. For, three or four evenings a week as she passed my cot to hers, my sister, two years older than myself, would whisper the magic word, “ Stay ! ” and that meant that I was to keep awake till we were alone in the nursery, and then she would open a discussion upon some Biblical or religious subject. Most obediently I struggled against the almost irresistible power of sleep, and there was something heroic in my conflict ; for she had no more regard for time than an Evangelical preacher, and her mind was full of scriptural knowledge and divine aspiration. She was

indeed "God-intoxicated", as someone said of Spinoza, and if she had been born into a more distant age, I can imagine her raving after Dionysus among the Theban mountains, being possessed by the god. But in Christ she found a gentler worship, and Him she followed with a devoted persistence that all the doubts and questionings of last century could not avail against.

During many years of her youth and early womanhood the conflict for faith was terrible. I suppose no one under fifty could now realize how terrible it was to the young Christian soul in those days. Doubts rent the very being asunder, and deprived existence of its meaning and object. Her beliefs had been limited to the Evangelical form of Christianity as universally and permanently true, being founded for ever on the Word of God, which could not lie. I think the Creeds did not give her much trouble. Even the Athanasian Creed, incomprehensible as it seemed and was perhaps intended to be, was only the work of human beings, belonging to remote and foreign churches. Even the hymns which she loved were only mortal. Once, in the depths of a wood, a lovable cousin, who possessed a singularly lovely voice, sang to us the old English song beginning: "Once I loved a maiden fair," and ending violently: "Now I do abhor thee"; and my sister observed: "How beautiful! It is almost a hymn!" And the Advent hymn, beginning:

“ Lo, he comes with clouds descending ! ” which I liked for that thunderous opening, was spoilt for her by the reference to those left “ Deeply wailing, Deeply wailing ”, when the organist put on all the soft pedals, and she ceased to sing. Equally trying was the verse :

Oh, what pleasures there await us !
There the tempests cease to roar ;
There it is that those who hate us
Shall molest our peace no more.

The verse implied eternal torments to all the people who did not like us, and as we had at least eighty cousins, the numbers must have been considerable.

But the Bible stood on a different plane. It was the Word of God, written by God’s own finger and literally true for ever and ever. Every morning and evening my father read to the assembled family a chapter from it, making no distinction between Old and New Testaments, and leaving out nothing but the exquisite love lyric of “ The Song of Solomon ”, as being too alluring for mortal hearts such as we and the servants might possess. I do not remember how a tender-hearted and decent English family got over such passages in Jewish history as Numbers xxxi., in which we heard the Lord of Israel, whom we all worshipped, commanding the wholesale massacre and looting of the earlier inhabitants of Palestine. But I am sure we accepted those atrocious passages just as they

came, and though we were not Jews, we English claimed all the privileges of the Chosen People, and on that prerogative felt justified in executing the Divine commands upon the opponents of the Divine will, whether in North America, India or Ireland.

The smallest alteration in the Jewish historical and poetic books as the English version has put them together was to her hateful and impious. She had little interest in the violent and often vulgar attempts to destroy the ancient Jewish histories and fairy stories of the Old Testament by the Biblical criticism which became popular in the middle of last century and still resounds among the crowds gathered near the Marble Arch on Sunday afternoons. The Jewish stories of the Creation, Jonah's whale and Daniel's lions, cannot matter very much, whether we believe them or not. Very likely she never realized that many of the Jewish poems, the Psalms and the Prophets, display a rancorous hatred that should not be implanted by Divine precepts in young minds. But she was wise enough to perceive that the charming and childlike stories and poems of the Old Testament had little more to do with the faith to which she longed to cling than had the vague and chaotic mythologies of India or ancient Germany.

But when scholastic and religious criticism advanced upon her Holy of Holies, which were the central doctrines of Christianity, then the

scholars and students of comparative religions struck her to the heart. By Christianity, like most English Christians of those days, she understood the personal existence of God the Father, Creator of the Universe and the guardian of His people ; by Jesus she understood the real Son of God, Mediator and Redeemer ; by the Holy Ghost she understood a pervading spirit of inspiration, always working to establish Christianity. If that belief was undermined and struck away, what was left for her soul ? What did it profit her to be told that our little galaxy is made up of 30,000,000,000 stars like our sun, round which the little dust-speck of an Earth revolves, and will probably revolve for some thousand million years yet ?* What was she among all the millions of universes, burning for millions of ages ? One night, as I was going away, probably for some campaign, she asked me plainly : " Is there a God ? " If I said No, she was resolved on suicide. But I could not answer. Who could say Yes or No ? Who could define with any words that would soothe her mortal anxiety ? I discovered her flask of chloroform, and afterwards wrote that I had thrown it into a lake far away in Italy. But the subsequent calm was only short-lived, and the same terrific question faced her still.

She yearned to feel " Gord's " presence always around her. She clung to the Evangelical

* Conclusion of Mr Bart J. Bok, a Dutch astronomer employed at Harvard ; quoted in the *Manchester Guardian*, August 13th, 1934.

pronunciation, feeling a difference between "Gord" and "God", and indeed the difference of conception is remarkable. If "Gord" were not with her, she was already absorbed into what Sir Thomas Browne called "the uncomfortable night of nothing", which to many is the worst kind of death. Even the Stoics, who came nearest to the Evangelicals and Calvinists, tried to believe in "a Friend behind Phenomena", and if there were no friend in this vasty universe, a soul so affectionate, so loyal, and resolved to fulfil all commands laid upon her, was lonely indeed. She was overwhelmed by loneliness of soul, and though she was an admiring artist and herself an excellent musician, she cared neither for art nor music unless they brought her some revelation of her God.

Once, when I had saved some money after the Boer War, I was able to take her and two friends to Switzerland; and there I found her seated among the rocks by the lake's edge at Coppet, and I perceived at once it was no good asking whom she was thinking of—Ruskin or Turner or Byron or any other man of genius whose name was connected with the place. I saw she was thinking of God, and if God were not present with her in every form of beauty, the beauties of nature and art were to her less than shadows. The mood of Browning's "Johannes Agricola in Meditation" often reminded me of her longing for rapture :—

There's heaven above, and night by night
I look right through its gorgeous roof ;
No suns or moons though e'er so bright
Avail to stop me ; splendour-proof
I keep the broods of stars aloof ;
For I intend to get to God,
For 'tis to God I speed so fast,
For in God's breast, my own abode,
Those shoals of dazzling glory passed,
I lay my spirit down at last.

The rest of that gorgeous poem, first published, I believe, with " Porphyrion's Lover " as " Madhouse Cells ", would have suited Marian's mood well until one reached the cruel satire beginning " I gaze below on hell's fierce bed ".

No doubt modern analysts, peering at the white night-moth of her soul, would urge that all her melancholy and religious concentration were due to the want of human love and desire for human marriage. But our busy little town did not produce the man for her. As a family we knew hardly anyone, and there was no man of education to be compared with hers. Except, of course, the clergy, whose natural duty it was to save her from despair ; and indeed, to at least three of them she became deeply attached, finding in them deep sympathy with her search for God. One of them she could have loved with all the silent passion of her nature, but another woman came between and the gulf of loneliness was only increased. That was the

cruel fate of many educated and highly refined women in England, though the young are now finding escape—an escape that in any form must be more attractive than such isolation as was hers.

Before her death, while she still retained her power of thought, she found the best sympathy with the Welsh fishermen in various remote villages, as at Abersoch on Tremadoc Bay. But she also maintained a long correspondence with one of the most learned and famous theological Professors in Cambridge. She left orders that a polished box full of letters, which she called her “burnt offering”, should be burnt at her grave beside the river Mawddach, near Arthog in Wales; and I, too, burnt scores of her letters to me, feeling that no one in the future could understand the doubts of so Christian a soul, or follow its wanderings in the labyrinths of exploring faith. Shortly before she lost all power of recognition and speech, she said to me with profound earnestness, “I cannot even die unless you believe in God.” Yet I was present when at midnight of July 19th-20th, 1928, I listened to her cry in the final struggle for life, and on her small grave in the churchyard beside the river I wrote the ancient epitaph known in the Catacombs of Rome: “*Abi in pace, Anima Christianissima.*”

She taught herself Greek enough to read the New Testament easily, and I think that if she had survived with full capacity to study Bishop

Barnes of Birmingham or Dean Inge of St Paul's, she might have derived some peace and comfort to her tormented but courageously faithful soul. The least evidence of Christian belief, either in a sermon heard from Canon David Vaughan of St Martin's, Leicester, or in one of the theological books she was always reading, fell on her soul like the dew of Hermon. When once I guided her through villages in Savoy, I was surprised to see how entirely ignorant she remained of the Roman Catholic rites and their significance. All her life she had been associated with Evangelicals who regarded everything Catholic with hatred or derision. Yet she was of too gentle a spirit to regard them with anything but wonder and silent disagreement. She was far from being either as learned or as fantastic as old Sir Thomas Browne, but I have often applied to her his rule of holy tolerance, where in the First Part of *Religio Medici* he writes :

I should violate my own arm rather than a church ; nor willingly deface the name of Saint or Martyr. At the sign of a Cross or Crucifix I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour. . . . I could never hear the Ave-Mary bell without an elevation ; or think it a sufficient warrant, because they erred in one circumstance, for me to err in all, that is in silence and dumb contempt.

It is strange that when in the midst of London the Angelus bell sounds late in the

CONVERSATION PIECES

evening or just before dawn, I do not think of Millet's well-known and rather affected picture, but of a little churchyard where the Mawddach sounds twice a day with the tides, and a frail little form, once inhabited by a noble spirit torn between faith and uncertainty, lies quiet now.

II

A MASTER

ONE summer afternoon when I was just over twenty, I was walking along the bank of the River Severn, which as a schoolboy at Shrewsbury I had known so well in all its wild and variable moods. On the water, peaceful now, but capable of rising fifteen or twenty feet in torrent when the snow on the Welsh mountains melted, I had learnt every kind of navigation, from the circular coracle of tarpaulin stretched over a wooden frame and driven by a single paddle with strokes like figures of eight just as the old Celts used to drive it, up to the polished and keelless "fours" which could be coxed under the Welsh Bridge only exactly in the centre of the stream while the oars scraped the stony bottom on both sides. On my left hand stood a leaden model of the Vatican Hercules, lumpy with muscles, and leaning on his club as though resting, but ready for the next labour that might come his way, whether subduing monsters or men.

Across the river the bank rose steep and high, turning the river into a loop that almost surrounded the ancient town, making it into a peninsula topped by two sharp-pointed spires, a redstone castle built for protection across the

narrows where the loop of the river almost joined ends, and close by, over the steep main road into the town, the famous Tudor School of Philip Sydney, Fulke Greville, the Samuel Butlers, Charles Darwin, and many boys almost as famous. But the beautiful grey stone building was then soon to be transformed into the abode of Roman relics from Uriconium, stuffed birds and crocodiles. There I had learnt to read the greatest writers of Greek and Roman antiquity as artfully prepared and preserved as the specimens of lizards, bipeds and quadrupeds now inhabiting the once familiar rooms.

As I stood beside the labouring Hercules, the great bell of St Chad's at the top of the Quarry struck four. St Chad's is a hideous church built in circular form about the time of George IV, I suppose to take the place of Old St Chad's which had been destroyed by fire or lightning long before. But the modern production of Georgian design had somehow become possessed of a bell to rival Moscow's or St Paul's; and I remembered the first night that I heard it from my bed in "Rigg's" and realized that I was at the great School. I remembered how rapidly I had then gone up from the Shell to the Lower Fifth, the Upper Fifth, the Lower Sixth, and so to the Upper Sixth, where I was a "'Poster'" and had to wear a top hat even on my way through the crowded market town in boating flannels down to the boats—a figure of comic dignity. Then came the

exam. for the scholarships (called Junior Studentships) at Christ Church, two years of shy and lonely reading at the appointed books, and now—only yesterday—the publication of the Mods lists and my name only among the “Seconds”.

It was an irretrievable fall, as from a precipitous and aspiring cliff. In the course of a life that is now long and has always been difficult and often perilous, I look back upon the sight of my name in that morning's paper among the Seconds as the most wretched and degrading moment. Nothing has ever compensated for it. No success in the writing of books, or at the wars as correspondent, or in a vast amount of journalism, or in the praise and honours conferred by Universities. In my own mind I have remained “A Second”. The inner knowledge of it has kept me shy and diffident in the presence of all in authority—bishops, judges, dons, sergeant-majors, censors, “brass hats”, admirals, generals, and beautiful women. To myself I have lived a thing forbid—a Second in Mods. A kindly American reviewer once wrote that I appeared to suffer from “the Inferiority Complex”, and perhaps he meant the same sort of thing, though I cannot imagine why he should have used those magnificent words for a simple want of self-confidence.

While I was miserably realizing my collapse, I saw approaching the very man I was most anxious to avoid. He was surrounded by Old

Boys, who had gained distinction in one way or another—one as Senior Classic, another for the prize in Greek verse, and a third for even having rowed in the Cambridge Boat. I hoped that in the shadow of the muscular Hercules I should escape notice, but the great man turned aside and, greeting me kindly, said he hoped I would come to see him soon. I was so overwhelmed by a strange mixture of shame and pride that I could hardly be polite enough to answer. He was Arthur Herman Gilkes, and I do not know whether in other great public schools there has been a master who without effort inspired the reverence that he did at Shrewsbury. When he first came, fresh from the highest honours at Christ Church, he had asked to be allowed to take the very lowest form, and, perhaps for that reason, his influence spread upwards throughout all the school.

My young brother, being indifferent to everything in the school except running and drawing, in both of which he was to excel, remained for many terms in the lowest form, where he acquired a peculiar kind of admiring hostility which I once illustrated. "Why does your brother never take off his cap to me as is the custom to every master?" Gilkes once asked me; and, remembering an old story in Greek history, I replied, "Because he is tired of hearing Aristides called The Just." Gilkes thought for a moment, and then said, rather sadly, "Yes, you're exactly right."

In one of the Jewish collections of wise sayings it is written, "He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him" (Proverbs xxvii. 14); and that is now my difficulty. For I could praise Gilkes though I stayed awake from dawn to dawn to praise him. There must have been many others in my case. In Oxford I found several men from other schools who were bored with the praises of Gilkes they heard from Shrewsbury boys. So that, though he died many years ago after serving for a long time as Headmaster of Dulwich, I will not praise him, rising up early or sitting up late, but will simply say he was the noblest character I have ever known, my motive and model, my only true master, even apart from the knowledge he gave me.

I admit that he started with every advantage that can influence boys. Born at Leominster of the old Quaker stock that were settled along the Welsh marches on the Hereford side, he had escaped the wanton pleasures of our cities and had been brought up like myself to live gravely. But what was a rarer advantage, he had escaped the isolated self-righteousness that sometimes I have found in the Quaker sect. I can just remember his mother as a gentle old lady still speaking the Quaker language and wearing the Quaker costume. Her son had grown into a model man in size and appearance, six-foot-four in height, of great physical strength and

endurance, his hair and beard tawny as a lion's, something of a lion, too, about the wide and steady eyes. We often thought what a Norse Viking he would have made, and if he had been reared in the Hitlerite Germany of to-day, I cannot doubt that his image would have been worshipped as a reincarnation of Odin or Thor in Berlin's cathedral.

Never having studied modern psychology, I will not attempt to name or analyse what daemonic power it was that gave him so rapid and lasting a hold over men and boys. Sympathy and understanding were in it, and everyone felt, as with Colonel T. E. Lawrence, that it was no good trying to palm off the most elaborated lie upon him, for he looked straight through to the back of your brain and knew what you were thinking. Pretence and lying were useless. Whether you spoke or stood silent, he knew the truth without words. Two Sixth-form boys were once found drunk in a bedroom, and the graceless young servant told me how the cause was discovered. "Old Gilkes, 'e didn't say to me, 'John, 'ave yer been gettin' beer for the boys?' But old Gilkes, 'e says, 'John, yer 'ave been gettin' beer for the boys.' So what could a feller say?"

I did not know at the time that he paid any particular attention to me in the Sixth, but I think now that the reason was that I listened to what he said in the one hour given to thought and the great English writers, on Tuesday

afternoons, and that I took some pains in writing essays for him—a task otherwise despised as being so inferior to Greek iambics. I was heartily ashamed of those essays, far more ashamed than of the paltriest set of Greek or Latin verse. Perhaps my zeal in trying to make myself understood in English as well as in Greek attracted him, though he never mentioned it. I glowed with shame when the essays were given back, until one of the Sixth Form told me he had heard old Gilkes say he often liked my stuff best of the lot.

By the porter's leave on that horrible day in June, 1877, I passed through the School Gates, and then through the central arch over which blazed the Royal Arms of Edward VI or Elizabeth, brilliantly illuminated in heraldry of their time, while on either side stood the stone statue of a schoolboy and an undergraduate in contemporary costumes, and beneath them in gold lettering the Greek inscriptions signifying, "If you love learning you will be learned." On the left I climbed the ancient wooden stairs to his door, and after long and painful hesitation I knocked.

"I hoped you'd come," he said, and we sat down in silence. Then he said, "What were you thinking of when we met in the Quarry this afternoon?"

"A Second in Mods," I said at once.

"I could see that all round your eyes," he said. Then, after a pause, he added, "Francis

Paget" (at that time the most cultured and exquisite of Christ Church dons, afterwards to become Bishop of Oxford) "has told me that you were very close up, especially in the translations, but came to grief in your Latin prose; chiefly in the misuse of some deponent verb."

"Stupid of the Romans to be so uncertain about their own language," I answered with a ghastly attempt to smile.

"No doubt," he said; "but we English are just as stupid. Think what it will be in two thousand years to write English prose or to read Milton correctly aloud! It's not a matter of great importance now, as Jowett said of Newman's insistence upon the difference between the Roman and Anglican doctrines; but to you it has been of importance."

"I know just as much as if I had got a First," I retorted with assumed bravado.

He looked at me, clearly seeing the misery that bravado tried to conceal, and perhaps perceiving the touch of irony I had acquired from himself.

"That's no comfort," he said, and mentioned the miserable subject no more.

"You are twenty now, I suppose," he began after a while. "You have probably forty or fifty years to live. That's time enough to be doing a lot. How will you use all those years?"

"I am well qualified for an usher in a second-rate school," I answered bitterly. "I can row, skate, climb hills, and write indifferent verses

in three languages. I suppose I should go to the Bar like everyone else, if I were rich enough. I suppose I could be anything second-rate, except a parson."

He took no notice of my bitterness at the time, but went on to explain the sort of work I ought to do for "Greats", expounding the meanings of ideal and material philosophy, and urging me never to make a hard and fast division between Ethics, Logic and History, which are the three parts of the exam. but must be studied and followed as one. I wrote down much of what he said that night, and afterwards he sent me a letter upon the study of philosophy and history as being one. I have the letter still before me. It is the very essence of thought, but difficult and long. Let me extract only a passage near the end of it as being of more service to those who have never had the chance of absorbing religious philosophy distilled through so calm and thoughtful a mind.

One more word about something which touches you more closely than your reading for a degree. I do not know exactly where you are in your thoughts, or in what position you are. One thing, my dear Nevinson, I assume, and that is that you are in doubt because you cannot help it, not glorying like a beggar mounted, but sorrowful for the loss of something that was valuable. Neither are you too haughty to own a master, but your master must, as it were, convince you first of his right to authority. You are not

piqued because so many bow down—in ignorance—and you stand up with knowledge. I will say guard against these three feelings, for I think they set up a worse idol than any they could pull down—self. Next, because you cannot now accept something that you have been taught, do not on that account throw away all. There may remain yet a faith supplying a humble man with a divine ideal and with highest hopes, though miracles and prophecies and churches be all taken away. You yourself know your own bitterness, but I too may guess, for I know—who could know better?—what it is to feel imperfect and yet be without a model, to feel weak and yet to know of no kind strength, to be cold or rebellious towards that which once made and which one feels might again make the happiness, the satisfaction, and the dignity of one's life. Do not think your position, whatever it is, final; recognize that as you have changed, so you will change yet more, and wait to see what time and knowledge and humility will bring you.

That was written in the autumn of 1877 and, with Carlyle's teaching, has perhaps saved me from the facile mockery to which Christianity lays itself open. That letter on philosophy was the first of a series which I still keep tied together like a sheaf of wisdom and unusual affection. To me it is still amazing that a man of such influence and vital occupation should have found time and interest to write so much to me, though the letters are always as concise and concentrated as Bacon's Essays. It was still

more amazing that, I think in 1878, he invited me to stay with him in a little farm cottage at Church Stretton, some twelve miles south of Shrewsbury. That Herefordshire village stands in the valley between the pyramid mountain of Caradoc and the higher moors of Long Mynde. Being both untiring walkers, we wandered far over the little-known country of Montgomery and Radnor, but on wet days we gave ourselves up to the close study of *Macbeth* and the *Electra* of Sophocles, on which he was publishing essays in hope of showing the Sixth what was the meaning of literature apart from the succession of words. I was in those distant days compelled most unwillingly to peruse Mill's *Logic*, which we both agreed was mainly waste of time, and I can only hope no Oxford examiner would think of setting it as a subject now. What I gained was the master's conversation, though I took little part in it, being, as he said, nearly always "curled up" in mind and heart, since a shy reverence kept me silent. I have often wondered whether Xenophon felt that kind of reverence in his modest friendship with Socrates, who, by laying a staff across his path one morning, turned him into the way of wisdom.

I have since, too late, perceived that my master's object in thus favouring me was to induce me to read aright for a First in Greats so as to wipe out the memory of my failure. He could not succeed in that because I was too impatient, rushing away from the regulation

books in my search for ultimate truth and beauty, to which they could have acted as fair guides, if only I had followed them patiently and remembered that I probably had many years to live for the search.

For one term our old Headmaster, Dr H. W. Moss, distinguished for his minute and infallible knowledge of all Greek except the beauty of its literature, invited me to take the Shell till Arthur Chance, my former companion in the Upper Sixth, and for many years afterwards a much loved master in the school, had taken his Classical Tripos ; and I do not doubt that Gilkes induced him to make this dubious appointment. But that term ended, and for the next fifteen or twenty years I hurried from one small employment to another, like a cinema moved too fast. In those years Gilkes was transplanted to the Headmastership of Dulwich, of which he made one of our leading schools. I went to see him there sometimes, and thought he seemed like a mountain pine removed to a suburban garden. But he always welcomed me with obvious joy when I went to call on him and his family, and I had the glory of reading the manuscripts and proofs of two or three of his books, especially the book on Roman life during the Samnite Wars. It was called *Kallistratus* (1897) and contained a fine account of Hannibal, who was always his hero as a noble type of ancient warrior, rather perhaps for his generosity than for his great strategic power.

In those days I was in command of D or Shadwell Company in the Cadet Battalion of the Royal West Surrey Regiment ; and after (also in 1897) Massingham, the great editor of the old *Daily Chronicle*, sent me out as his correspondent in the Græco-Turkish war, Gilkes began to write to me as "The Student astride the Lion". But that deep-rooted irony began to fade as campaign succeeded campaign in South Africa and the Balkans, and his praise of my work far from England became excessive. Then that terrible day at the end of July, 1914, arrived when I went down to Dulwich and found him quietly coaching the boys at cricket. Quoting the words of the herald at the beginning of the war between Athens and Sparta, and knowing I should understand them, he only said, "This day is the beginning of great evils for the whole world." So we parted, and I set off to Berlin, expecting a terrible war, but not so terrible a horror as fell upon the civilized peoples in the next four years.

In the midst of the war, when I was probably in the Dardanelles or at Salonika, I heard with sorrow but without much astonishment that Gilkes had taken Orders because he was told that curates were wanted, and after a time, I think about 1916, had gone to a church in Oxford (the church we called Archipelago, though it has another name), close to the Martyrs' Memorial. A letter from him begins :

Your friendship and notice mean much to me. I daresay my Oxford venture will succeed, but I don't feel sure. I am sixty-seven years old, and Oxford always seemed to me too artificial in its notions and manner of existence to be satisfactory, but I am very glad to have a parish of my own to try upon.

I went to see him in Oxford when I was on leave from France towards the end of the war, and met him cycling to his church in his gown. Getting off the cycle, he came to me at once, and we walked towards the church. "I suppose you were rather horrified at my going into the Church," he said, and I impudently replied, "I should not have been horrified if Socrates had become a priest in the service of Apollo."

He said nothing, but smiled as on our old ironic basis, and he pushed on, saying he always read in the church my letters and telegrams from any Front of the war, because the people could understand them. No eulogy could have been more grateful. It almost wiped out the shame of forty years.

He died in Oxford in 1922, when I was somewhere far away, perhaps in Washington for the Naval Conference—too far away, in any case, to let England know how great a loss she had suffered. The few notices I found in the papers were meagre and ignorant, except, indeed, one in the *Shrewsbury School Annual*, written by his faithful colleague, E. B. Moser, who had been, next to himself, the best master in the school ;

and in saying that I do not forget my own schoolfellow Arthur Chance, who died in 1934 and was similarly celebrated by Moser for his devotion and fine scholarship. I could not add to those two noble epitaphs. But Moser is older than I am, and the memory of even the greatest schoolmaster soon fades as the generations of boys rapidly pass. So I have added these personal memories as another tribute to the greatest man I have ever known, and the man who has most deeply influenced my own life from the first year when he came as a master to the old School, on the very day when I, too, arrived, early in 1872. Even after death he has so remained for me up to the present year of 1935, and sixty-three years is a long period for any man's life to influence another's.

III

SOMETHING TO SAY

WE read in D. A. Wilson's *Carlyle*, Vol. III, page 263 :

Froude came in during another discussion of Plato as Carlyle was saying : " Plato's style is admirable, but he has nothing particular to tell you " (which may have suggested Tennyson's famous description of himself : " I have the best command of English since Shakespeare, only I have nothing to say ! ").

In a hospital, not long ago, one of the nurses said to me, " I hear you have written a book "— I was reading the proofs of *In the Dark Backward*—" How clever you must be ! I've sometimes thought of writing a book myself, but I should never know what to say." I told her that many people felt the same incapacity, and added there were others who never knew when to stop. But it was interesting to observe that a hospital nurse shared the incapacity with Plato and Tennyson.

IV

GREEKS

ON the 15th of May, 1897, I was on one of the low hills close to Arta in Epirus. It was in the Græco-Turkish war, which I have called the "Thirty Days' War" because it lasted from the 18th of April to the 18th of May. All who, like myself, were on the Greek side, learnt in that month the full art of retreat, for, with one exception, the Greek armies in Thessaly and Epirus retreated every day. The exception was the fine advance of the Greek division under General Manos from Arta up the mountain road towards Janina, in those days the Turkish capital of Epirus, near the frontier of Albania. But the advance was checked about 15 or 20 miles on the road and we were driven back together with the inhabitants and cattle of all the villages upon Arta, which was defended by two big guns on its citadel.

After a short pause to reorganize and rest the men, the Greek officers ordered a further attempt to check the Turkish advance by storming the low hills opposite Arta on the left bank of the Arachtos—the river which runs past the ancient town into the Ambracian Gulf of Actium, where Antony and Cleopatra lost hope of the world's empire. The gallant but hopeless Greek

attempt was made in drenching rain in the afternoon of May 13th, but the Greeks were in the worst possible position, trying to advance up gentle slopes in face of an enemy ranged along the summits of successive lines of hills. Out of a division of 8,000 or 10,000 men all told, I estimated at the time they lost about 300 killed and perhaps 1,000 wounded. As the sweeping rain continued and grey mists hid the hills, retreat seemed again inevitable, though my colleague, that gallant Elizabethan, E. F. Knight, offered after sunset to drive the Turks clean off the hills if given 700 Evzones (mountain regiments) to support him.

That was the Battle of Gribovo (spelt Grimpobo, as modern Greece has no *Beta* except as a Vee sound) and it raised my opinion of Greek fighting spirit, which had sunk very low owing to repeated retirements and heavy losses, especially in one regiment which was said to have suffered for having broken the vow of chastity which all took during the war. As the flood of rain, continuing for three days and nights, made movement difficult, the Turks spent the next day mainly in collecting the dead into heaps, stripping them of all their clothing except their pants, and in the case of the Greeks pouring petroleum over them and setting them alight. We could watch the thin columns of smoke arising from the scattered heaps as they burnt. But such Greek corpses as our stretcher-bearers contrived to reach were brought down

and arranged in a row of about thirty or forty in the Orthodox cemetery, half-a-mile outside the town. The regiment which had suffered most severely, for the reason I have mentioned, were set to dig a long broad trench only 2 feet 6 inches deep, and though urged on and assisted by the chief priest, they dug slowly and sulkily amid the indecent taunts of the soldiers looking on, so that bodies often arrived before a place in the shallow trench was ready for them.

The private soldiers were brought down half-covered in their blankets upon stretchers sticky with their blood, and laid in the trench dressed in their uniforms except that their heavy blue overcoats had been taken off as being too useful against the rain to be wasted. Their shirts were ragged and filthy with the campaign, and their bare feet stuck out through holes in their shoes. Their hands and feet were tied together with cords or handkerchiefs, perhaps to keep their ghosts from walking. Their faces were left uncovered, as is usual in Greek funerals, and their eyes had not been closed. About three dozen of them were laid in a row as soon as the trench was large enough, the priest praying over them, three or four at a time. Earth was then hurriedly thrown over their faces.

The ten officers had separate graves and were carried down in little coffins of black canvas, the lids being borne in front of them, adorned with huge white crosses. Their wounds were concealed with tufts of cotton wool. Nearly

all had been shot in the head. In the chapel two priests chanted psalms and prayers over them, with the whines and quaverings of the Greek Orthodox Church. Over one distinguished officer of the 6th regiment some of his privates wept. The rest had no mourners.

As we stood waiting for General Manos, the sun at last broke through the sullen clouds, revealing a prospect of extraordinary beauty and historic fame. For there lay the great Gulf where the history of the old world was changed ; and there was Paxos where the voice of Pan was once heard lamenting the departure of the ancient gods from earth ; and there was the domed hill of Leucas ; and close under it the rocky little island of Ithaca, home of Ulysses ; and beyond Ithaca the mountains of Cephallonia, the last quiet home of Byron.

As I gazed upon that scene, so full of the memories of gods and godlike men, it was not of them I was thinking, but of the score or two of men who were lying close beside me under the shallow covering of earth. Only a day or two before they could have stood beside me in the pleasure of the sun, and in the quiet enjoyment of that historic prospect now so brilliant in pellucid and rain-swept air. They had been summoned from their little red-tiled cottages, surrounded by olive gardens or by ploughed fields of maize and dwarfed currant-vines. They had grown into men through all the troubles of babyhood and boyhood. Their mothers had

tended them, their fathers had taught them how to do the farm work, the savage dogs of Greece had welcomed them with smiling faces and wagging tails. Living upon cakes of sticky maize, pumpkins, bits of calves and resined wine, they had grown into men, all their muscles, blood, and valves working in miraculous order, and they had known love and action and instinctive thought. But now they were lying in a blood-stained row, unconscious of joy and sorrow and all the movements and changes of life, dead when life was at its best, and so to lie till only a few white bones and a little earth were left of all that had been so full of energy, so marvellous in human power. In the course of my long and wandering life as war-correspondent I have seen scores or perhaps hundreds of the dead who were killed in war, but those young farmers whom I saw buried in that month of May have remained most deeply in my mind. Perhaps because they were the first I saw laid out and buried on the field, or perhaps because they were Greeks—the natural heirs of the finest artists, poets, and philosophers that the race of man has ever yet produced. There they now lay, having passed through the brief glimmer of life that comes to us all between darkness and darkness.

After a long wait, usual in the Near East, as in the Far, General Manos arrived with his staff, and was received by a company of Garibaldian redshirts who had come from Italy

to fight for Greece. He was a small, grey-bearded man, with mournful eyes and manners of invincible politeness. After he had spoken a few brief and soldierly words, others succeeded him with the crowding sentences, rhetoric and gestures of modern Greeks. I could not but remember the great funeral address of Pericles over the Athenians who had fallen at the beginning of the thirty years' war with Sparta nearly twenty-four centuries before. Sparta with her allies was then as formidable an enemy as the Turks were now, almost as brutal and ruthless, and in the end as victorious. Thucydides says that if ever Sparta collapsed she would leave hardly a trace of her existence. He was speaking chiefly of buildings and architecture, but in every form of art his observation was equally true, except for the modern upholders of oligarchy and dictatorship who might regard her as an example of warlike success, and of a community regulated for service of the State, like ants or bees. But when we speak of ancient Greece, it is only of Athens that we think, unless we are archæologists or sociologists. It is Athens alone that has influenced the whole civilized world in art, literature and science; and in political theory and practice equally. A colleague of mine as war-correspondent in Salonika once asked me, "Why do people spend so much time over the silly squabbles of obsolete Greek tribes?" But for Athens the question would not be asked or

answered. But for Athens hardly one in five millions of us would pay the least attention to Greece, whereas to-day all educated men and women come under Greek influence almost every hour of their lives, whether in buildings or books or reasonable behaviour.

I do not forget the influence of Egypt and Crete, or the collections of Homeric poems, which probably sprang up along the Asiatic coast, or the lyrics that came from the islands, or the early philosophies also reaching Athens across the bridges of islands from Ionia. But it was Athens which recognized the value of all these arts, and so extended the knowledge of them along the Mediterranean, the spiritual home of man, as far as our own islands, and even across the stream of Ocean to lands that Athenians hardly imagined.

In the summer of 1935 a little schoolgirl, Maud Mason, aged 13, at a village school near Manchester, wrote in her essay on "My Native Land" that "England is only a small country, but it is better than any other". Some applauded her judgment; the Inspector and others thought it went too far, and the controversy actually came before the House of Commons! But Pericles said exactly the same of his native land and no one has reproved him, though he said it at greater length. What he was reproved for was, first, his love for a beautiful woman, not an uncommon error, and secondly, his pride for allowing Pheidias, the

supreme sculptor of the Parthenon, to introduce a portrait of himself and of Aspasia among the figures on the frieze of the pediment. We can only wish he had done so and had them labelled with his name and hers.

The famous funeral Oration of Pericles (431 B.C.) remains the noblest expression of patriotism, and represents the finest ideal of a democratic or liberal State. Translated into English it should be displayed on the walls of every British school, and learnt by heart by every pupil over twelve; especially at the present time when almost every country but our own has fallen under the stifling grip of dictators or oligarchs, and even our own political and social liberties are threatened by the poisonous infection of despotism. All through the speech, though he seldom mentioned Sparta or the Lacedaemonians by name, he made the Athenians feel the contrast between the free and unrestrained intercourse of their city with the harsh and submissive life of their enemies, always spent, as it were, in barracks. The Athenians, he said, called their form of government a Democracy because all the citizens had a voice in it and all shared its advantages, whereas other nations were governed by despots, or by a few so-called Oligarchs, whose ruling was as severe as a despotism.

In the very remarkable passage that followed, Pericles turned from politics to the habits of Athenians in daily life. He spoke of the

equality of all before the Law, and of the public career open to everyone, no matter how poor or undistinguished in family. Everyone in the city might do what he pleased, provided he did no harm to his neighbours, and in pleasing himself he need take no notice of the scowling looks of puritans, which were tiresome though harmless. Indeed, such looks were rare, for the citizens were indulgent to each other, and appealed to the laws chiefly in protection of the poor and oppressed who have no other redress for their wrongs, except the general sense of shame that anyone in the State should suffer wrongfully.

In the same strain of praise for the city which he himself, with the aid of the greatest of architects and sculptors, had raised to the height of beauty, Pericles pointed to the religious holidays and processions that gave welcome relief from toil, and to the charm of their household simplicity in decoration, as well as to their advantages as a great maritime power able to import freely from all the countries of the world whatever they required for comfort or decoration. Unlike their enemies they did not exclude strangers coming from abroad, as though every foreigner must be hostile, but threw the gates open to anyone who might profit by the sight of the city. And, as to war, they trusted to the courage and good sense of the individual soldier rather than to the toil and unfriendliness of monotonous drill.

Then follows a sentence embodying the highest ideal of any country's life: "We combine beauty with simplicity, and we follow culture without effeminacy. No one is disgraced for poverty, but we might find fault with a man who made no effort to keep himself above the poverty line. Finally," he concluded, "I regard our city as an education for all Greece, and everyone going out from among us can be counted upon to behave with the greatest versatility of body and the finest cultivation of mind."

It was a proud boast, displaying the highest possible form of patriotism by holding up the country as an example for all the world and for all time, since she was the ideal of national freedom and widespread education among all classes. "We love our city as a man may love his mistress," he said near the end of the address, and for a city such as Pericles described even that might not be an impossible emotion.

No matter how much their race had been mixed with dominating Romans and perverted Turks century after century, the men whom we laid in that shallow trench at Arta in the middle of May, 1897, were of the stock descended from the Athenians upon whom Pericles delivered his immortal oration. Except for the absence of the highest artistic, literary, and scientific genius, each of those modern Greeks whom I saw lying there possessed all the qualities of the audience who listened to Pericles speaking

from his high platform in the Keramikos. Besides their enviable qualities, it is true they possessed two which English people might condemn. Greeks still show that restless curiosity which St Paul noticed in his visit to Athens. As you walk about Greece, whether in Thessaly, Boeotia, or the Peloponnese, at every village and little town a crowd will follow you, asking where you come from, where you are going, and how much your clothes cost. They will then stand at the open cavern of the eating-house to watch what you eat, and how you eat it. The habit is not to be blamed. It is a stimulus to intellectual knowledge.

The other quality is generally thought more blameable. It is the natural tendency of all mankind to run away from danger, a tendency which Greeks have not been able to restrain. It is very ancient among them. Lycurgus, knowing this objection to violent death among his migrating people, laid down his amazing code of laws, mainly designed to keep them steady in battle. Thucydides tells us that up to their siege at Sphacteria every Greek had supposed that Spartans would always choose death before surrender, yet they surrendered. And, again, in the Persian War, Themistocles, having removed all the inhabitants from the city and gathered the ships in the straits separating Salamis from the mainland, took the precaution of blocking up both ends of the strait to prevent the fleet sailing away, and to

compel them to fight, however unwillingly, while the crowding citizens assembled on the island watched their great citadel burning, with her archaic temples and the noble archaic statues that were afterwards built in for the foundation of the Parthenon and so were preserved for our admiration to-day.

One may call this tendency to run away from danger cowardice, but I should attribute it rather to the keen imagination which realizes the proximity and horror of death, and much prefers by any means to preserve life. For life is beautiful, full of joy or interest, and irrecoverable. That was the imaginative fear which I saw illustrated so often among the descendants of Pericles and his Athenians during the Thirty Days' War. But it was not only in pity for the children of so superb a race that I have always remembered those unfortunate Greeks killed in a hopeless conflict with the chief enemies of Europe, though they were of the race for whose freedom Byron died. I have felt equal pity for the Germans, French and British, whom I have seen caught in the wire entanglements of front lines, left till they fell to pieces in their uniforms, or lying bare upon the plain of Santerre, east of Amiens, skeletons and dust, relics of battles already long ago before the Great War ended. On an average one may assume that a dead soldier was twenty or twenty-two years old. At that age I was just entering into the realities, the activities of life,

G R E E K S

which alone make the greatest happiness. Fifty years of experience and active life were then before me, and of those fifty years the dead men that I saw were deprived, from all the unutterable joys of life they were cut off, and now there was nothing to be done for them but to sprinkle a little earth that would mingle with their own dust as the fifty years that should have been theirs passed on unheeding.

THE DERIDED AGE

FEBRUARY 2ND, 1901, dawned cold and grey, but a few gleams of crimson varied the eastern sky. For two or three hours that morning I stood opposite Stanhope Gate in Hyde Park, commanding my company in the Cadet Battalion of the Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). We were part of the Guard of Honour keeping the route clear of the murmuring crowd which pressed upon us from behind, eager to catch a glimpse of the great Queen's funeral procession. For she had died at Osborne eleven days before.

At last, borne upon a gun-carriage, came the coffin, covered with the Union Jack, upon which were placed the Crown, the Sceptre and the Orb. We presented arms as it slowly passed in utter silence between the reverent rows of bared heads. It looked a small object to be endowed with a world-wide interest so intense and significant.

Close behind it rode the new King, eldest son of that dominant and imperious woman, himself nearly sixty, but hitherto excluded from all the recognized functions of royal life, except pleasure, and by the consent of all unworthy of

the succession, had he not succeeded. On his right rode his younger brother the Duke of Connaught, who still (1935) survives, and was then known among soldiers as one who would have gained royal reputation in war but for his royal birth. On the King's left rode Wilhelm II, the German Emperor, who also still survives, son of the old Queen's eldest daughter, proud of his knightly bearing, conscious of the twenty-two army corps ready to move at his word, and conscious, too, of the common people's curiosity to gaze upon an omnipotence bestowed by heaven's dispensation. Behind them rode other Kings and Royal Princes, confidently secure as they supposed upon the thrones and Royal seats of Europe. In heartfelt adoration of all this monarchical glory displayed upon their own familiar scene, the London populace silently stared their fill.

The gorgeous procession of wealth and power passed on, with all its mortal Kings, and our officer in command (our own Colonel having been lately killed in the South African War) gave the commands "The Queen's Cadets, Slope Arms! Move to the right in fours! Form fours! Right! By the Right, Quick march!" I marched my own company down through the East End to their Headquarters at the mouth of Shadwell Basin, near their own squalid homes, and on the way I realized that the great Victorian Age had passed into the irrecoverable shadows of history.

I had lived through forty years of that age, and for about a quarter of a century had followed its course with interest and some knowledge. Now (1935) I have lived a third of a century since the end of it. But twenty-five years of youth are not easily obliterated, and, however much I may regret it, I remain a Victorian. I continue liable to that reproach because time has allowed me no help for it. An eminent critic has lately written, "Nobody living to-day—and deliberately I choose the word *living*, and not the word *surviving*—has much sympathy with the Victorian Age."* I was sorry to read that, for with the "sardonic smile" with which the aged of ancient times tried to ward off the violent death due to old age, I should have liked to murmur: "Not only surviving but living too." Unhappily the critic rules out that pathetic claim, for I have a good deal of sympathy with the Victorian Age, and therefore he excludes me from the ranks of the living, and his educated scorn is grievous.

But as on that February day I marched my Company down Commercial Road to the Docks, I tried to recall in brief that age of sixty-four years which now had been rolled up like an ancient manuscript. Naturally I thought first of the conspicuous statesmen who had served the Queen for good or evil, but always, as I believed, with uncorrupted sincerity. I thought of Melbourne, Peel, Palmerston, Gladstone,

* Mr W. J. Turner, *The Great Victorians*, p. 491.

Disraeli, Salisbury and Chamberlain. I thought of the age as one of extraordinary intellectual power, varied and on its various sides unsurpassed since the Elizabethan and Athenian ages. In solemn and triumphant procession there passed before me the biologists and patient followers of Natural Science—Darwin, Faraday, Huxley, Tyndall and crowds of others obscured to me by want of knowledge. These were succeeded by an ethereal flight of imaginative writers, influencing the world by their inspiration more strongly than all the theorists and abstract philosophers. I have found the influence of Dickens transforming the attitude of Russians towards children, though Russians are rather given to abstractions. And even now I would not exclude from the greatness of intellect such poets as Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, and Matthew Arnold, though they have fallen on evil days and evil tongues. Next came the dark robed lines of priests and clergy, who miraculously revived religion among the Anglican, Roman, and Free Churches—Newman, Manning, Pusey, Scott-Holland, Gore, Dean Stanley, and a cloud of others passing through the air like flocks of discordant but inspiring birds.

Looking down the dismal little streets on either side of the Commercial Road, so familiar to me and so abhorrent, I remembered that, revolutionary as the age had been in every other respect—in science, literature, and religion

—its greatest revolution had been accomplished in the attitude of the upper and middle classes toward the working people. Apart from the scornful critics who deride the literature of the Victorian Age, most of those who pour upon the Age their contempt and abhorrence are moved by the atrocious history of the industrial development during the first thirty years of the Queen's reign. The shadow of the dark Satanic mills began indeed to fall upon the country some years before her accession, but it was deepened beyond conception during the years following. The development of steam changed the whole face of the country and the lives of the people. Victorians who remember Yorkshire, Lancashire, or the Black Country in the middle of her reign know what the change meant. Factory chimneys arose, belching poisoned air and tons of soot over square miles of the ancient fields. Sewage and the washings of chemical and dye works converted bright rivers into conduits of filth. Refuse mounds and slag heaps took the place of hills. Over wide regions of the North and Midlands the sun neither rose nor set, but at the best peered through smoky clouds thin and white as a ghost. Trees, pastures and hedges turned black and withered. Washing in the backyards was speckled black with the evidences of prosperity. Coal pits were sunk to unknown depths, and their narrowest galleries scooped out. Cotton mills, cloth mills, iron works, and shipyards

poured out their various products, and each was fed by a population of "hands", produced as by some mechanical cohabitation. For the exercise of wearied or drunken workers sex was the only pleasure left remaining. Into those early and middle years of the Victorian Age fell the Hungry Forties and the Cotton Famine. It was those years that built for the working people the long and dismal streets of reddish or brownish brick huts, with four rooms apiece, usually shared between two families, or even three. In summer time I have often seen the occupiers with their sleepy children seated on the doorsteps of these huts because they dared not face the armies of bugs and fleas that swarmed inside. For two years I lived among those East End workers, and I can speak with authority and not as the scribes.

Around the "centres of industry", especially in the North, the millowners, coalowners, and shipbuilders erected many mansions as comfortable as any they could expect in heaven, and from this isolation as gentlemen they directed the seething antheaps of workers who caused them to leap and bound with prosperity. By industry, patience, and taking the chance they had won a way of living for themselves and their families which they had no thought of abandoning. They were to be admired for their qualities, but Dickens, *Punch* and other satirists have so pictured them that when we speak of Victorians we generally think first of them.

Yet even Carlyle, who in *Past and Present** and *Latter Day Pamphlets* struck the first resounding blow at the smug complacency and self-satisfaction of this class, had something to say in favour of the type which he embodied as "Plugson of Undershot" :

I look at that surly face of thine with a mixture of pity and laughter, yet also with wonder and veneration. Thou complainest not, my illustrious friend ; and yet I believe the heart of thee is full of sorrow, of unspoken sadness, seriousness—profound melancholy (as some have said) the base of thy being. Unconsciously, for thou speakest of nothing, this Great Universe is great to thee—The Fates sing of thee that thou shalt many times be thought an ass and a dull ox, and shalt with godlike indifference believe it. My friend—and it is all untrue, nothing ever falser in point of fact ! Thou art of those great ones whose greatness the small passer-by does not discern.

But a very little later he attacks the acquisitive class of man who has indomitably spun cotton merely to gain thousands of pounds. He calls him a mere Buccaneer and Choctaw. His hundred Thousand Pound Notes are but as a hundred scalps in a Choctaw wigwam. He had enlisted a thousand men to spin and toil for him, to make war upon a very genuine enemy, bareness of back and disobedient Cotton-fibre. He called upon his men to "have a dash at Cotton", and they followed with a cheerful

* *Past and Present*, Book III, Chapters V and VIII.

shout. "They gained such a victory over Cotton as the Earth had to admire and clap hands at. But in the end even his own host was in mutiny. Cotton was conquered, but bare backs were worse covered than ever."

That was published in 1843, just at the time when "The condition-of-England-Question" was beginning to thrust itself to the front in the shape of Chartism and other rebellious protests. That, with the twenty years following, was the time most exposed to our critic's derision. Think of the hideous buildings of those days, the hideous furniture inside them, the hideous coverings and decorations designed and accepted for the bodies of men and women. A film contrived to illustrate the fashions of the 'sixties arouses irrepressible laughter among any audience of to-day. I omit the feminine adornments of chignons, crinolines, bustles, constricted waists, and shoes crushing the feet almost to the point of Chinese gentility.

It is matters of that sort—the appalling condition and neglect of the working people, the outrageous hideousness of the manner of life among the well-to-do classes—that have brought derision upon the Victorian Age, when we look back upon it from such heights as we have reached in this century. We forget for a moment our own atrocious wars, our vast unemployment, and our apathy towards any education for working people above the age at which for the well-to-do classes it seriously begins.

It is natural for each generation to scoff at its predecessor, and, like the bright young man in Homer, to boast itself much better than its fathers. A beggar mounted must naturally be taller than the horse, and a child on its father's shoulders glories in its elevation. The old man who belauds the brave days of old is a proverbial bore, and those who mumble over past achievements petrify into tombstones of themselves. But it seems more generous to remember Goethe's verse :

Tell us how can you be so polite
When youth in its wildness comes pressing on you ?
To call them unbearable I'd have a right
If I had not been so unbearable too.

The present habit of dishonouring our Victorian fathers and mothers was adorned by the charm of Lytton Strachey's malignity, never satisfied till it had revealed some point of weakness in a revered and even heroic Victorian. He gave tongue to his subtle contempt, and a whole pack of critics have followed with the exultation of hounds in full cry, until "Victorian" has become a term of scorn or depreciation already vulgar in its frequency. But the yelping hounds have forgotten the first two rules of good criticism : one, that a man and his work must be judged by his best, not by his worst or second-best, and two, that each must be judged by the age to which he belonged.

Consequently the satirists have missed the real distinction and glory of the Victorian Age. The vitally important people and works that emerged from that age were rebels without exception. It was the most rebellious age of our history. In religion there was the vitalizing rebellion of the Oxford Movement against the torpid, uninspiring condition of the Established Church, and from another branch came the abolition of Hell as a perpetual torment worse than fire. In poetry it was a rebellion felt by Browning, Swinburne, Matthew Arnold, A. E. Housman and Kipling against the unthinking, easy-going versifiers of the years that followed the deaths of Byron and Shelley. Even Tennyson shed a new beauty and even a new depth of thought by his *Maud*, *The Lotos Eaters*, and *In Memoriam*.

The daring adventures of the 'nineties were a conspicuous rebellion against hypocrisy and the commonplace. In Natural Science came the rebellion of Evolution and Electricity against scientific theories hitherto accepted as established.

As to the abominations freely practised upon the workers in factories, pits, and fields, pity ("that rebellious passion"), sympathy and indignation drove to rebellion such different natures as Lord Shaftesbury, Carlyle, Ruskin and the early Socialists of the Fabian Society—Bernard Shaw, Sydney Olivier, Graham Wallas, and a continually growing crowd of followers

along similar lines—William Morris, Hyndman, John Burns, Cunninghame Graham, J. A. Hobson and H. W. Massingham among poets and*journalists, not to speak of the politicians—Keir Hardie, J. Ramsay MacDonald, Joseph Arch, and Samuel Barnett, who aimed at true education by a fusion of the educated and half-educated in Toynbee Hall.

The Victorian Age was an age of rebellion, and I think of all the crowd who led that noble army of martyrs with an admiration that no scornful criticism, however venomous and attractive, can shake or in the least diminish.

But I have left my Company marching back through Whitechapel streets, slippery with cabbage stalks, cods' heads, and the offal of slaughter-houses, and down again through the dingy surroundings of Commercial Road till a sharp turn to the right through Johnson Street brought us to the large Drill Hall standing in a waste land strewn with tin cans, old boots, and cartloads of the poor man's rubbish—a waste land since converted into one of the most pleasing and serviceable gardens of London in memory of the new King. I am proud to think that possibly it was so converted owing to my suggestion in a letter to the *Nation*, under Massingham.

“Company, front! Order arms! Slope arms! Right turn! Dismiss!” I commanded, and the Cadets made off in groups to their shabby homes, while I, in uniform, sword and

THE DERIDED AGE

all, stood for a time on the pierhead of Shadwell Basin looking down upon the turbid river hastening to the sea. To compare the rushing water to the stream of time bearing all its sons away was too obvious a thought. But I had heard John Burns' famous saying that the Thames was "liquid history", and I knew that in that history I had just witnessed the end of a splendid stage.

VI

CRABBÈD YOUTH

“AGE and Crabbèd Youth !” To all who are growing old the transference is natural. Age and Crabbèd Youth cannot live together. The more nearly I approach what is called “a ripe old age”, the more I feel the truth of that apparent paradox. My chief mistake in life was that I was born about fifty years too soon. But for that involuntary and inevitable mistake I should now be just under thirty—the most enviable age for man or woman. At least thirty or even forty years of active, varied, and public life would still lie before me—years of energy and possible success—years in which I might have been doing fairly well in journalism, literature, the Army, the Navy, or even in Parliament. It is true that nothing but my father’s poverty prevented my following one of those active and public pursuits—nothing but his poverty and his extreme opposition to the Army and Navy, which he thought wasted unless the country’s armed forces rose as the Puritans had risen to resist the encroachment of the Pope’s privy paw, against which every true Englishman should fight to resist the last padding footstep of Rome.

But if I had been young and callow during the years of the great social revolution between 1890 and the Great War, I should have flung myself with heart and soul into every movement of change. I could have fought for liberty among Greeks, Irish, and Boers, and for the extension of the Suffrage among English workmen and women, with far more energy and effect. In matters that are usually thought minor I could have helped both men and women to free themselves from the strictures of Victorian tyranny. I could have rinsed the last torment of starch from men's collars and shirts, and from women's dress wherever used. I could have given the top-hat a final kick into the river at Eton. I could have abolished shiny shoes and neckties. Perhaps, to abolish cricket would have needed too drastic and bloodthirsty a revolution, but one might have altered the rules to save the side that was "in" from their waste of life while hanging about and looking on. Why not make them field, and reward a catch by adding ten runs to their score?

I think that all these small but revolutionary changes in our everyday life could be carried out by any distinguished sportsman or Royal Prince, even in the face of a Conservative Government, without cruel legislation. If I were only thirty now, I should have been released from many trammels which oppressed my spirits when I was fifteen or twenty. In the harsh and continuous games of football in its two kinds

I can suggest no immediate improvements for the young. But on the water a considerable gap might be left between Four and Five in an eight, so that each half of the boat might row exactly out of time with the other, and the catch on the water never be lost. Some crabbèd youth will propose it, and then the Boat Race will be more exciting, and the force of rhythm alone will be diminished.

But what I envy most among the crabbèd youth of to-day is the freedom of association between the young men and the young women. Go to the Lakes of North Wales and see them, setting off together in early morning dressed almost exactly alike—short breeches and heavy nailed shoes, a thickish shirt or jerkin, hair blowing freely in the wind, a tightly filled rucksack on the shoulders, and enough money for a week in their pockets; perhaps a map, but more likely entire indifference as to the journey's end. I have travelled much, but nowhere seen a happier sight. And yet, when I was young, I could never have shared in that ecstasy. Nor would any girl have shared in it. Girls would have looked on me with crabbèd disapproval, fearing the worst, and choosing rather to cling together in little bunches, like flowering emblems of innocence in safety.

Many small changes have contributed to this greatest and most beneficent change of all. Exams. and unrestrained reading have made conversation possible on equal terms. Short

skirts, "knickers", stockinged or bare legs, have accustomed young men to disregard the common allurements of feminine dress or undress; sweating and swimming have provided links of a common activity, the assistance of a man's arm over a difficult piece of rock-climbing has increased that sense of friendship provided by nothing so much as by dangers shared together. Time has removed the tiresome shyness about functions natural and necessary to all animals, and the conquest of equal citizenship in 1918 after a prolonged struggle has exorcised the old sense of inferiority which haunted and checked women's spirit of adventure.

It is no wonder that for centuries crabbèd youth had relied on the Homeric line, already quoted, "We boast to be far finer men than our fathers"; and one may find more modern passages to the same effect in Sydney Smith's biography. In a letter to Jeffrey, for instance, he writes :

I am at last reconciled to my father. He was very ill, very much out of spirits, and tired to death with the quarrel the moment he discovered I ceased to care a halfpenny about it. I made him a slight apology—just sufficient to save his pride, and have as in duty bound exposed myself for these next seven years to all that tyranny, trouble and folly, with which I have no manner of doubt at the same age I shall harass my children.

Or again, from a lecture by the same generous and kindly man :

The Scythians always ate their grandfathers ; they behaved very respectfully to them for a long time, but as soon as their grandfathers became old and troublesome, and began to tell long stories, they immediately ate them. Nothing could be more improper and even disrespectful, than dining off such near and venerable relations, yet we could not with any propriety accuse them of bad taste in morals.*

We elderly gentlemen must read such a passage with a shudder, for we do not like people who eat their grandfathers. But something akin to such savagery remains inherent in youth. In a distinguished and thoughtful novelist of the present day I find the exact expression of crabbèd youth's dislike of us who, like myself, had the misfortune to be born before their time. Describing the sense of the students at Leeds University just before the War, Storm Jameson writes :

A poem beginning, "Come down from your throne, old Grey Beard," excited us at the time. We scorned everything that had been accepted, and all living English writers over forty. We were not going to be taken in by lies. We said we refused to accept responsibility for what had already been done, thought, and said in the world. As to what ought to be done to put right a rotten state of affairs we had opinions and to

* Quoted in *The Smith of Smiths*, by Hesketh Pearson, p. 100.

spare. We honestly believed that we were going to bring to pass a world free of war and poverty.*

The same spirit of crabbèd and destructive youth is heard in Walt Whitman's familiar lines :

Come, Muse, migrate from Greece and India,
Cross out, please, those immensely overpaid accounts,
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Æneas',
Odysseus' wanderings,
Placard " removed " and " to let " on the rocks of your
stony Parnassus,
Repeat at Jerusalem, place the notice high on Jaffa's
gate and on Mount Moriah,
The same on the walls of your German, French, and
Spanish castles, and Italian collections,
For know a better, busier, fresher sphere, a wide, un-
trod domain awaits, demands you.†

" Pioneers ! O Pioneers ! " So the great prophet of Youth once sang ; but now in America he should sing his grand prophecy again.

Is it not the same warning to Youth that Hamlet gave to his mother, urging her to fight against " That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat, of habits devil ? " If Youth were not always crabbèd and tiresome to old age, how blank and static this world would be ! Search the records and you will hardly find a young Conservative, unless his property is attacked. That is why it is harder for a rich man to enter

* *No Time Like the Present*, by Storm Jameson, p. 69.

† *Leaves of Grass : Song of the Exposition II.*

heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. That is why we ageing people should still cling to my two mottoes, "The better part of discretion is valour," and "All change is good."

But Youth, turning a crabbèd eye upon the great Victorian Age, with its crinolines and bustles and whiskers, rejoices also to have freed itself from the old rules of decency and self-restraint between men and women. I cannot say whether the change is genuine or cloaked or really existent at all. Novels are supposed to represent real life, and among the hundreds of novels annually spouted from the libraries there are evidently some which treat of subjects that the great novelists of last century would have left alone. When I enter London by the great arterial roads, and see the rows of motors ranged along the roadside near certain well-known inns, I do not suppose their inmates are veiled by a modesty that the decent women of last century would have approved.

Perhaps this wanton freedom has grown out of the habits of war, when all the young were eager to take and give the pleasure that was almost certain to be momentary, and to grasp an opportunity that might never come again. For the moment (Midsummer, 1935), this country is not involved in a war sufficiently murderous to justify the casual and shortlived pleasures of sex, but the habits of war have become customary, almost without reproach.

One might even go so far as to doubt whether Youth, no matter how crabbèd, has a right to sneer at last century's behaviour as over-prim and prudish. Even in the Victorian Age one can find gossip of impropriety that must make modern Youth feel itself equalled if not surpassed. When one reads the earlier records of Royal and high Society, and tries to realize the love-making of fat, greasy, and smelling Princes and Dukes with their fat, greasy, and upholstered mistresses, one is inclined to worship the Puritan God and take all the vows of monks and nuns.

Only in one respect has modern Youth a right to boast itself better than its fathers and mothers. Upon the streets of London are far fewer prostitutes plying for hire than one used to meet in Regent Street and Leicester Square, fifty years ago. I remember old Cato's commendation of the hiring prostitutes in Rome, who served the State by diverting from Roman matrons the barbarism of masculine passions. If, by increased immodesty or "frankness" among themselves, Youth has diminished the practice of the hired simulacrum of love, we have no right to frown and scowl upon what we should once have called their immorality. Immorality varies little from one age to another, but prostitution for cash down is the petrification of the spirit, and at the end one can hardly even say, as Browning's Cleon wrote to Protus in his "Tyranny", "Live long and happy, Glad for

what was." For prostitution brings no gladness, but only a rapid melancholy and depressing shame at the mockery of a profound and exquisite emotion.

Besides, it is always easy for Age to turn with effect upon crabbèd Youth, as has been shown in a Chinese poem which has lately come into my hands :

The continuous and honourable satisfaction I feel
In remembering my illustrious ancestors
Must compensate me in this hour
Of parental disappointment.
Because my great-great-grandfather Wang Hi
Was a man famous for his knowledge
Of the celestial Sayings of the Wise
I thought it seemly to send my beloved son to the
University,
That our stem might flower.

To this end I made sacrifices of personal comfort,
My robes and the robes of my household
Were cut from inferior silks ;
I avoided the tea houses
And similar opportunities for extravagance ;
I even sold several vases from my private collection
Of china of the Tang dynasty ;
Also I demeaned myself to take tea with the tax
collector ;
And the fruit of my privations is this :
My son Wang has learned speech of an exceeding
glibness,
But not wisdom ;
He has been a President of the Union,

He waves a dank hand and looks portentous,
Saying nothing with epigrammatic conviction ;
He insults the Past to the full measure of ignorance,
Scoffs at the Present and ignores the Future ;
He miserably declines to be serious,
Boasts publicly of being unemployed
And living on the savings of his father,
And appears not to know that he is unemployable.

He is obviously marked out to become a politician,
And will probably soon wear a black tunic.
Anyway, I wash my hands of him
And shall cut off his allowance.

This imitation rather than translation of a Chinese father's lament was made by William Kean Seymour, who allows me to use it. For it exactly describes what happens to many a father wishing to give a son a better education than he himself received. When my father took me to Oxford, I noticed a peculiar modesty, even humility, in his bearing towards all University authorities, as though they would look down upon him for never having been to a University. Yet he had toiled and saved to send me there, even with the help of scholarships. He regarded the dons with reverence, and the flashing young undergraduates with an old man's envy and respect as beings who were enjoying a sphere of life which he had never known, nor at his age could ever know.

I remember the extreme shyness with which he received breakfast in my brother's rooms at Exeter College, not realizing that the

excellent meal, far better than anything he had ever enjoyed at home, was paid for by his own monotonous toil and thrift in the past. He was indeed too courteous and modest ever to make a mistake in University behaviour. Yet he made one serious mistake which I hope he never discovered. As I have already described, his dominating passion was hatred of the Puseyites, the Ritualists, the Tractarians, or whatever else they were then called. So it was unfortunate that one morning as we were crossing Tom Quad to look at the rooms that were to be mine in Meadow Buildings, we met a short and sturdy figure, with pallid and deeply wrinkled face, unshaven for some days and hardly illuminated by large pale-grey eyes that seemed indifferent to the outside world. He was dressed in a Doctor's scarlet gown, and before him stalked a black-robed verger bearing a silver mace with a little silver bird on the top. My father paused to let them pass, and then said to me, "Now, I don't really object to that. That's what I call the real old High Church." I discovered afterwards that the venerable figure in the scarlet robe was Pusey, as I have told elsewhere.

VII

NOAH'S RAVEN

A CHILD who had been brought up on the Bible as I had been, once asked me how the raven that Noah sent out of the ark contrived to live when the flood-water still covered the earth. I could only reply that a raven after its kind must have lived upon the corpses and other carrion still floating upon the surface of the water. It seemed to me a parallel or forecast of literary men who still live upon editing or extracting the remains of putrefying old authors who might just as well be left to rot in ease on Lethe's wharf. I speak without animus, for I myself once wrote a *Life of Herder* with an account of his forgotten German contemporaries—quite a morgue of half-submerged corpses.

“Let the dead bury their dead” is a precept of divine wisdom.

VIII

TWO PICTURES

ONE hardly likes to mention the name of Botticelli now ; it has become so vulgarized by affected admiration. One summer afternoon in this century I was in the common 'bus that took you from Carfax in Oxford up to the top of Boar's Hill, where I was going to stay with a superior gypsy. On the top of the 'bus was seated a group of Oxford ladies, with a man or two beside, and for all the distance, past Bagley Wood, perhaps three or four miles from end to end, the whole of that delightful party discussed charming subjects in turn, reminding me of the fair ladies and gentle cavaliers who, in flight from the plague-stricken city of Florence, beguiled their leisure with alluring stories, as Boccaccio has recorded.

I could not help hearing the name of Botticelli frequently mentioned, and if I had not been alone I should have laughed. For talk about Botticelli (carefully pronounced in four very distinct syllables) had even in those days become a scornful mockery in Oxford—but no one laughs alone. So, wearied of their delicious chatter and exquisite quotations from Walter Pater, I got down at the turning to Abingdon

on the left, and went up the rest of the way on foot. That lane along the crest of Boar's Hill gives a singularly beautiful view of grey and brown Oxford at certain breaks in the long wall which some landowner has erected to conceal his field of grass ; for a man may do what he likes with what is his own, especially if it is a bit of our country.

But as I trudged along beside the wall the name of Botticelli kept beating its four syllables in time, and I began to call to mind all the beautiful works of his that I had then seen—the circular Madonna with the Child and angels in Florence, the similar one in our National Gallery ; the large one of Venus being blown ashore naked upon a curling cockleshell, at Florence too ; the allegory of scandal or venomous hatred, perhaps also in Florence ; the solitary nude figure of Venus in Berlin, the Nativity crowned with a wreath of angels like roses above the cattle shed, in our Gallery. And then I remembered a long horizontal picture, also in our Gallery, which has always seemed to me the most beautiful and unusual of all his pictures in the world.

The scene is laid in a wood where the air is always warm and the olive grows in profusion, though mingled with other trees of straighter stems. Right across the foreground the figures of Mars and Venus lie stretched, not embraced, but as far apart as the canvas allows, their feet scarcely touching and their heads at the full

distance from each other. Mars lies fast asleep, his eyes shut, his mouth slightly open with a sleeper's breathing, his head, with copious dark brown hair, just resting against a tree trunk. His young and graceful body, smooth as ivory, reclines on its back, naked except where his right hand just supports by its weight only a narrow cloth thrown carelessly across his middle parts. His slumber is so deep that four Satyr children are seen carrying away his weapons; none of them is over childhood, and all playful enough for the purpose. One has placed the spacious helm of Mars over his little head so that his face cannot be seen. He supports the butt of a spear, with both arms wound round it. The next faun supports the centre of the spear, and is looking round at Venus with a smile full of fun, but just a little derisive too, and he flickers a fantastic tail. The third, riding astride the end of the spear, is blowing a large conch shell into the right ear of the sleeping Mars with eager solicitude to wake him up. The fourth, smiling with success, has put on the god's brazen cuirass and is seen crawling out under his sleeping shoulders, close beside the god's left hand, which just touches an upright pipe with the second and first fingers, which must be part of the armour, I could not say for what purpose used. Two of the faun children's heads show tiny white horns, as being connected with wild nature.

Just in front of this merry family lies Venus herself, not extended at full length but half leaning up, supported perhaps against some small tree stem, and her right elbow resting also upon a silken cushion. She wears a long silky garment from neck to feet. One bare foot is extended below it. The other foot is hidden under the white drapery that is her only garment, and her left hand hangs carelessly over the middle of her left thigh. The two breasts are prominent just below the opening of the garment at the neck, and are held up by a band of embroidered silk which shapes them into twin globes and passes over the shoulders and down the front of the white garment till it is lost in folds about the middle. The thigh and leg down to the foot are unusually long. The hair, of lighter brown than the hair of Mars, hangs in rippling curls on either side of her face, and is gathered up into a knot behind, and one long lock runs far down her back.

But the deepest significance of the picture lies in the face of Venus. At first sight she seems to be reclining at ease after a casual meeting, such as might happen to a Greek girl gathering in her sheep at dawn. But for Venus the first ecstasy of love is over. What enjoyment may be taken and given in love is over. She has taken and given it to the full, and now her warlike lover lies there, helpless as a baby. She looks across at her sleeping lover with a certain tenderness still, but with a pity perceiving

that his urgency is so soon satisfied. There is a touch of pity or even contempt at the perception that the urgency of desire can be so soon allayed, while she lies calm and ready for the renewal of love's ecstasy from one watch of the night to another. For in love like hers where the body sleeps but the heart still wakens, the watches of the night are scarcely to be separated till morning begins to turn the blue-black colours into brown.

As I continued on my way, looking down upon the city of medieval thought and modern sports in the valley, I remembered another picture of a scene similar to the old Italian's, but with what a difference! It was painted about the middle of last century, I suppose, by Jules Bastien-Lepage, who was "plein air", by whatever subtlety that main school is divided. In place of a cool Mediterranean morning, fragrant with myrtle and aromatic herbs, we are in the great plains of France, good for cultivation and the growth of food for man and beast. Around lies a wide field, where a few haymakers are tossing the grass and heaping it up into cocks. The whole region, with a few low hills in the background, swelters in the pale heat of early afternoon, the hour of the labourer's rest. In front, where the edge of the field is shown by the growth of a few wild flowers and two or three slender trees, a working man and a working girl are taking their short rest. The man lies stretched at full length on his back,

his long legs on the ground. You can see the nails in his heavy boots, and the trousers are crinkled and coated stiff with mud. Each hand clutches a single side of his jacket or waistcoat, so as to keep the whitish shirt open to the air. A belt of twisted stuff is tied round his waist, connecting the trousers with the shirt. His head is covered with a loose straw or felt hat, tilted over the eyes so that nothing can be seen of the face except the brown bushy beard, which projects below the brim of the hat. He lies, the natural picture of weary and sweating toil—the life necessary for all our living. He is also the image of some poor fellow killed in war and left upon the ground to rot.

But, as in the Italian picture, the main interest is gathered up in the face of the woman. She sits close in front of the man, near to his right knee. She sits upright, but still the slight bending of the back reveals the long and weary toil. The feet in their heavy shoes without nails are thrust straight forward under the whitish cotton skirt, the soles being turned up towards you, as only working people turn them. The sleeves of the gathered white bodice are rolled up to the elbows, showing strong forearms brown with the sun. Over the blouse or bodice is a sort of sleeveless jacket laced across the front just below the deep breasts. The neck is left freely open, back and front, and from the neck springs the large round head, covered with brown hair, just parted in the middle and cut to clear the

ears. The face is broad and round, in Norman peasant type ; the nose short and broad ; the mouth very full and large, the upper lip rather fuller than the lower ; the heavy arched eyebrows just meet each other at the root of the nose. The large dark eyes stare straight to the front, obviously conscious of seeing nothing visible.

There is weariness in the whole figure. The hands worn with toil rest at last wearily upon her knees. But there is more than weariness in her eyes. There is disappointment that this is all that life can give her. It is a sensual face full of vague desires, and capable of every delight. The sightless vision before her eyes may be of beautiful clothes and fine banquets and heroic love. And here she sits beside her dormant husband, with the rough pail at her feet such as peasants use for milk or cider or the ration at mid-day. When this brief rest is over, nothing remains but the sweltering toil of the afternoon, and then a return to one of the smelling cottages built in the square round the steaming dung-heap, which is the farmer's wealth. When the sun begins to burn a little less and the man slowly awakes, the hot labour of the hayfield will start again, and at dawn to-morrow will be renewed, and so renewed the day after, till the fields are cleared and can be made ready for the following crop.

Poetic imagination has won two great triumphs—the creation of imaginary gods, and

TWO PICTURES

the perception of country life in its reality. A connection between these two marvels of the artistic mind may be found in the eyes of Venus and in the peasant girl's eyes, though they are separated by so many centuries of changing history and changing art.

IX

THE FOOL'S PARADISE

I HAVE often envied those who lived in an age of faith. How delightful for an Athenian to know that the God of Heaven was not above love affairs like one's own ; that Apollo with harp and gleaming arrows rode through the sky, and uttered prophetic words in ambiguous oracles ; that wisdom was somehow incarnate in the blue-eyed Virgin of gold and ivory, standing securely up there in her solemn temple on the rock ; that the roaring of the sea and the crash of earthquakes were the voices of Poseidon ; that when you walked through the hills you might casually meet Pan piping to his flocks ; and that if you took ship to the west, you could live with an alluring witch upon a fragrant island, or consort with men of unusual common-sense, though each had four legs and the body of a horse.

I understand the cry of Wordsworth in one of his moments of inspiration—that sonnet beginning, “ The world is too much with us ” :

Great God ! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

How delightful it was in Athens till old Socrates, with his ugly face, came loafing around, asking tiresome questions about the gods, and even raising doubts of their moral behaviour. Or again, to have been a practical Roman citizen in Italy, surrounded by the gods of the cornfields, orchards and vines, of sun and rain, of night and day, of peace and war, and of Rome herself, where dwelt a Dictator, an Emperor so divine that when he died he was seen ascending bodily to heaven, there to live in Imperial luxury, quaffing nectar with Jove himself.

Those classic times were far more amusing than scholars give us to suppose. But the joy of life (which lies in the unexpected) reached its highest in the millennium of unquestioned Christianity among the civilized regions of Europe and Great Britain. Nature and the supernatural were then at their liveliest and best. No one could tell what might happen from minute to minute. This actual world was a fairyland of adventure and marvellous occurrences, so that men and women enjoyed themselves like children in a universe of perpetual play. The relationship between men and animals was childlike and benign. St Vincent was protected by a raven that drove wolves away. A wolf that had stolen a pig from a widow brought it back at St Blaise's request. St Patrick's prayer caused a sheep to bleat in the belly of the thief. St Brandan's

sailors, having landed by mistake upon a great fish that was repeatedly and tempestuously upheaved by trying to emulate the whiting in putting its own tail in its mouth, suffered no hurt owing to their patron's prayers. St Martha, that model housekeeper, so tamed the monstrous dragon of Tarascon on the Rhone that she led him about tied to her apron strings, with the limbs of men still projecting from his mouth. St Juliana was cut up, boiled in lead, and drawn asunder between four horses, yet without hurt. St Cyprian and St Justina were plunged together into a cauldron of boiling wax, pitch and grease, and all this cookery "gave them marvellous refreshment". St Lucy of Syracuse, being condemned to a brothel, became so immovable that a span of oxen could not stir her one inch. St Agnes, being driven naked to a brothel, was suddenly clothed by a growth of her own hair. When a Pope Leo cut off the hand that a woman had kissed, it was restored whole to him again. St Benet by his prayers caused the death of two talkative nuns. And finally, when St Augustine took a vow never to speak to a woman alone, he kept it.

Unhappily, the world is no longer so gay as in those playful years, but the age of miracles is not entirely gone. Every now and again, as at Lourdes, the Virgin or some other benignant saint appears among us. At a little town in Ireland I have been shown statuettes of the Virgin and saints that sweated blood, and there

were stains of blood upon them, sure enough. If you lose your purse in Italy, you will be advised to pray to St Anthony of Padua, who is not identical with the thief. If as a baby you have not been marked with a cross of water by priestly hands upon the brow, you are heavily handicapped on the road to salvation, and in England you may be forbidden burial in consecrated ground. Cannibals, as is well known, devour their victims, not because human flesh is particularly delicious, but in the hope of imbibing or absorbing the special virtues of their prey; and when I was among reputed cannibals in Central Africa, I concluded that their evil reputation was unfounded, for otherwise they would not have missed the opportunity of assimilating such obvious virtues as I possess. In Frazer's *Golden Bough* we are shown how common among primitive peoples is belief in the magical effect of eating the sacrifice or even the tribal god, also with a view of absorbing divine qualities. And when the bold and learned Bishop of Birmingham, Dr Barnes, denounces a similar rite practised in Anglican churches—denounces it as a return to magic and barbarism—he is ostracized by most of the Anglican clergy as an “Unbeliever”, and has stood in danger of legal prosecution and imprisonment.

Some other accepted beliefs appear to be equally miraculous and amazing, though less gross and material. We have, for instance, the doctrine that the Creator of the Universe sent

down His only Son to this infinitesimal dust-speck of an Earth, there by a cruel death to redeem from their sins the men and women whom He had caused to be created. No matter by what symbolism it is interpreted, the mind reels under such a conception. Yet it is held as a belief necessary for salvation by millions of my fellows. Nearly all the people one meets in Great Britain, Europe, and America, North and South, would say they believed it. They accept it as an article of faith, and, strangest fact of all, they receive a certain comfort from their belief in what they call "Christ's vicarious sacrifice", as diminishing their apprehension of future penalties for sins of their own doing.

It is true that in all these ages of faith, including the present, there has been a reverse side to the charm and comfort of belief. The African savages among whom I have passed were haunted day and night by evil spirits and malign influences, always on the watch to work them ill, to frustrate their hunting, their fishing, or their childbirth, to cast an evil eye upon them, or to strike them dead. Even the Greeks, with all their supposed cheerfulness and radiant intelligence, were dogged by chimaeras dire and by an irresistible Fate, usually malignant. Even the Latins stood in awe of omens, and watched with apprehension the flight of birds, a wolf crossing the path, and the malign or benignant appearance of bowels in sacrificial animals.

As to Christianity, we are all familiar with the appalling horrors that have always attended it. Here is Satan going about among us like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. There is the pit of Hell, the burning lake of brimstone, where the serpent dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Into it all the heathen, the ungodly, the evil-doers, the heretics, and the unbelievers are to be plunged, tormented for ever and ever, twisted on wheels, torn by demons with red-hot pincers, tortured with an ingenuity too obscene to be described, but depicted freely on the walls of Latin and Greek churches throughout Europe. And the horror is not merely medieval. Samuel Johnson was overwhelmed by the fear of death because he thought he might be sent to Hell, perhaps owing to his susceptibility to women.

In my boyhood, as I have related, we lived in similar terror. We could almost feel the flames of Hell licking the soles of our feet. I have read that the present Bishop of London has lately declared that the idea of roasting souls in Hell has made more atheists than any doctrine else. That is a statement for which he would have been burnt alive four hundred years ago, and deposed from his bishopric fifty years ago. But he was certainly right, and for this cause the Roman Church, always so wise in its generation, invented the intermediate stage of Purgatory, where comparatively wicked or unbelieving souls might dwell in mitigated torment for an

abbreviated period of eternity—a period that might be still further shortened if their bereaved loved ones would contribute sums of money for special Masses at the altar. None the less, I well remember the indignant rage when Dean Farrar, in three sermons at St Margaret's, Westminster, abolished Hell; and so dubious is the soul's future still that in quite recent years, at the deathbed of a most virtuous and devout woman, when someone whispered, "She has passed to heaven," her husband replied, "At least we may perhaps hope so."

Still, we are forced to admit that even modern Christianity, with all its remaining beliefs in magic and the abominable horrors that humanity has invented for its own torment, can supply to many millions of people a guide to decent life, and, what to me is more vital, a sense of ecstasy, an imaginative glory, a personal devotion to the conception, rarely experienced in other more reasonable forms of thought. It also possesses the incalculable advantage of community. The identity of the Roman service all the world round gives it, not merely power, but a sense of fellowship, such as I feel in a well-disciplined army or even a battalion. I am conscious of that feeling in every church, and even in little chapels of Bethesda or Ebenezer, while the harmonium drones, and the dingy gathering of work-people strive to sing in unison some atrocious hymn, such as "There is a fountain filled with blood". We must recognize something in this community

essential to spiritual exaltation. I doubt if Robinson Crusoe on his lonely island thought much about morality, or meditated profoundly on the mysteries of the universe, or really missed the church-going bell. It is obvious that we cannot live in isolation. How often I wish we could ! But something in our nature demands community for its fulfilment.

Here, then, we have forms of religion—(side by side with Christianity I might perhaps include Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, the other three chief forms of religious belief in the modern world)—forms of religion which undoubtedly supply comfort, devotion, a sense of fellowship, and sometimes a sense of beauty (especially in the Roman Catholic symbolism) to the greater part of mankind. What are we to say to it all ? What are we to say to dwellers in Fools' Paradises ?

The Fool's Paradise has many forms besides the religious. We go to a cinema show. We may see active cowboys riding wild horses, discharging revolvers, and galloping away with fair damsels in distress. That is not a bad Paradise. I personally should enjoy it, though it is a Fool's Paradise. But far more foolish is the Paradise representing money-making crooks, poisonous vamps, lecherous villains, yielding or unyielding girls, luxurious motors, stupid trickery, and a humour to make you vomit. Such scenes and such plots give immense delight to millions of our fellow men and women. They

sit for hours enthralled. They envy the splendour of the food, the wine, the girls, the luxury of furniture and "apartments". Heaven help them!—they roar with laughter at the jokes.

What are we to say? We know these people are living in a Fool's Paradise, and only long to live in it more decisively—to enjoy in their own persons the wealth and luxury and vice they witness as shadows. Are we to assume superiority and tell them they are fools allured into a Fool's Paradise? A Roman poet tells us of a citizen, I think an Argive, who would sit for hours alone in an empty theatre witnessing glorious dramas, as he supposed, though the stage was utterly vacant. His friends, perceiving his folly, dosed him with hellebore and similar drugs beneficial to the insane, so that he suddenly became aware of his madness. Was he grateful for their assiduous care? Not a bit of it! He reproached them for depriving him of his one pleasure in life.

It is tempting to be an iconoclast—a smasher of idols—to take hammer and tongs and batter the ideas and beliefs in which millions of our fellows have found beauty or comfort, just as the Christians battered the statues of the gods in Athens, Rome, and the Provinces. The Christians believed they had something truer, more beautiful, more comforting, to put in the place of the beauty and comfort they destroyed. Personally, I find the behaviour of the Stoics more admirable. It is one of life's little ironies

that Zeno, the real founder of Stoicism, himself a pupil of Socrates, came from Cilicia, perhaps from Tarsus, which some three centuries later was to be the birthplace of St Paul, a confusing and irrational thinker, subject to mental aberrations, and fanatically inspired by fantastic conceptions of his own. But the Stoics, the followers of Zeno, were, I suppose, the most strictly logical and purely rational sect of philosophers that the world has ever known. "The only good is good"; "The only evil is evil"; "Truth is good; falsity is evil." There was no escape from their logic.

If you were good, torture was a matter of indifference to you. If you were evil, no amount of comfort, wealth, luxury, or power could be a blessing. They knew perfectly well that the Athenians or Romans around them were living in a Fool's Paradise with their variegated gods and superstitious ceremonies. But they made no fuss about it. They did not go around with hammer and tongs, pulverizing those charming deities. Though far from being a humorous set, they tried to smile and look a little pleased when they encountered evidences of the vulgar beliefs. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius was, I suppose, the greatest and most famous of the Stoics, but to myself the slave Epictetus is more attractive and less chilly. Reflecting upon the childlike charm of the classic religions, he said, "When we see children at their play, we laugh with them and clap our hands."

That is far from the spirit of the idol-smashers, and I admit there is a touch of superiority in the attitude ; perhaps, too, a tone of regret for the happy days when it was possible to romp with the worshippers on the floor and join in their jolly dances and processions. Reason may bring more regret than comfort. Often, after dwelling for a time among the gods of Athens and the medieval saints, or when I emerge from the service of some Christian cathedral, I feel like one who comes out from an afternoon performance of a pantomime into the mud, the glare, and the dinginess of the Strand. How much jollier and more beautiful was the fairy scene I left behind ! How splendid on the stage were the colours, how desirable the princess, how enviable the prince, how terrifying the dragon, how entertaining the harlequin ! The Strand is reasonable, but reason seldom brings comfort, and the Stoics were not a merry crew, though they assumed a reasonable cheerfulness under appalling griefs and pains. It was magnificent, but it was not peace. Remember the keen words of Mephisto when he tells the Lord that man might live a little happier if the Lord had not given him that gleam of heaven's light which he calls reason :

Ein wenig besser würd'er leben,
Hätt'st du ihm nicht den Schein des Himmelslichts
gegeben ;
Er nennt's Vernunft, und braucht's allein,
Nur tierischer als jedes Tier zu sein.

The Stoics certainly did not use their gift of reason to become more brutish than the brutes. But as far as ordinary human happiness went, their advantage was very small. I can well imagine that the Stoics were rather chilly people to live with. They believed in reason ; they believed in goodness. Both beliefs, held alone, tended to divorce them a little from ordinary warm-blooded mankind. Perhaps it was just because they felt a little chilly that they introduced belief into what they called Nature—a process of development, a gradual advance, an evolution, almost the same, I suppose, as M. Bergson's *Élan Vital*.

But the assumption of that advance seems to imply a power not altogether unlike ourselves, working with a purpose, probably beneficent. It is impossible to believe in a Providence that could design or permit the slaughter of ten million young men of the finest type in a European war for causes of which they knew nothing ; and could design or permit the freezing to death of innocent schoolchildren caught by a blizzard in the Rockies. And yet even the Stoics found it a necessity of thought and existence to imagine some high purpose in man's life, and in the Universe. Even George Meredith, whose nature was entirely "pagan", and who denied all forms of religion and spiritual belief, once told me he could not imagine that the universe was going on its way without some purpose—a comprehensible

purpose. But these imaginations or beliefs have little or nothing to do with reason. Perhaps they are the leavings of immemorial superstition, the infection of a faith almost universally held among mankind. Certainly they are not to be proved by reason alone. No judge, no logician, no mathematician would accept any proof given in their favour.

It has been my misfortune that modern psychology had no place in the education of my time. I came just too soon for it ; so I did for economics. Yet those two sciences have now eaten up all the rest, and a man who is ignorant of them feels like a Zulu who cannot read the missionary's Bible. But from what conversation I hear, I gather that reason has rather fallen into discredit among our psychologists, just as freedom has fallen into discredit among the followers of Mussolini, Bernard Shaw, Lenin, Stalin, and other modern advocates of despotism. What is reason ? they ask. What place has it in the human mind to control thought or action ?

I once offered my little granddaughter any present she might choose, "within reason", and she adroitly replied, "How much is reason?" I believe that is the question of modern psychology. How much is reason? In the great Drift of Central East Africa the scientific excavators have lately unearthed a lizard—a monstrous lizard, therefore called a Dinosaur—said to measure some 70 feet long,

and to have weighed I have forgotten how many tons when in life. But the brain of that unimaginable and colossal creature was only the size of a man's thumb. It appears that, according to modern psychology, the size of reason in a man's mind is in the same proportion as the Dinosaur's brain was to the huge body weighing several tons. Brain the size of a man's thumb was all that the antiquated monster could look to as a guide in its slimy wallowings.

As far, then, as I understand the modern view, the mind at its best works far more by emotion and intuition (which I myself would regard merely as a rapid summary of observations and reasonings) than by pure reason consciously applied. It is also incalculably influenced by tradition, and unconsciously it keeps seeking to renew the bond with past generations and the millions of its fellows in the present world, just as a dog always goes snuffing round, unconsciously seeking for the trail of his prehistoric pack or herd. To some of us also, as to saints and great artists or poets, there come periods or brief flashes of a spiritual ecstasy in which reason seems to have no part. It may come with a sudden opportunity for noble adventure, or with a sudden inspiration of beauty, or with an overwhelming love for a woman, and we cannot say that reason plays any part in such periods or moments of ecstasy. They are entirely unreasonable, and our friends take prudent care to tell us so.

That I may not seem to base this view entirely upon my own separate existence, let me quote a passage privately written for his own use by C. E. Montague, my dear friend, and my censor during the war in France, and published after his death in his recent *Memoir*. Speaking of the poet's unconscious inspiration, he says :

Often, as in some of Shakespeare's lyrics, this divine rightness is particularly far from the rightness of this world. It gains its end—that of moving men's hearts and minds—through a kind of inspired unreason, irrelevance, incoherence, a pointed rejection of just those sequences of thought, those connections and transitions which might have seemed more logical and lucid. And yet again, a kindred rapture may visit a man suddenly faced with peril and opportunity in a battle or an accident. He is released—that is all you can say. Fear and desire, his two keepers through life to preserve and enchain him, are suddenly gone, and he goes to self-sacrifice as lightly as a child draws its breath, with so perfect a freedom from all sense of effort, danger, or pain that presently he is surprised and abashed, and feels like a secret impostor when people credit him with heroism.

To gain the greatest possible number of such moments, to find them protracted in time, and clarified as windows giving on the world outside you, and to be able to use them as springs of action or creation in the intervals between their visits—this is success in life, this is growth to the full stature of man, so that his feet can be on the

earth and yet his head reach at many places into heaven.*

With that passage we might compare the famous passage in Walter Pater's *Renaissance*, defining success in life according to the frequency of similar moments of ecstasy in the perception of beauty. But far more closely parallel to the spirit of C. E. Montague are Wordsworth's lines in his *Character of the Happy Warrior* :

Who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover ; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired.

Those of us who cannot accept the dogmas or aspects of any among the three or four great forms of religion existing in the modern world, must be able to offer some substitute, some equivalent for the enthusiasm, the devotion, the ecstasy which fill the hearts of sincere believers in one or another of those forms. Perhaps in such passages as these we may seek a way towards it, but I admit the path is narrow and hard, as is the path to all wisdom.

As to the teaching of the new psychology in regard to inherited crazes, complexes, and inhibitions dire, the arbitrary interpretations of dimly remembered dreams, second sight and telepathy, supported by the analogy of wireless telegraphy (an analogy which scientists tell me

* C. E. Montague : *A Memoir*, by Oliver Elton, pp. 298-9.

is utterly false)—I am too much a sceptic to deny the value of any such gropings after truth. To turn again to Wordsworth, they remind me of :

Those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings ;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised.

As a sceptic, I could not even deny the possibility that the spirit of Beethoven may be heard thumping a tambourine like a Salvationist lassie, or that the spirit of Sir Oliver Lodge's son may tell his father that he drinks a kind of ethereal whisky-and-soda, and smokes ethereal cigars beyond the grave. I have not examined these subjects in the light of modern psychology, and perhaps they are beyond the light of reason. I cannot deny them, I can only hope with all my heart that there is no word of truth in them ; for if there is, life to me is worthless.

But let us emerge from these shadowy regions. I should always like to follow in the path of Goethe when he said—" If you must tell me your opinions, tell me what you believe in. I have plenty of doubts of my own." What, then, have we left ? As St Paul said in one of his lucid intervals, " We must put away childish things." With some regret, we must part with the dear old miracles, apparitions of

saints and angels, the direct interpositions of Providence, and the confident anticipation of the pearly gates and the great white throne. Let us also put away spiritualists, mediums, clairvoyants, furniture-rappers and all their trumpery. Perhaps we may even have to put away that absolute faith in the omnipotence of reason, out of which the great thinkers of last century built themselves a kind of Fool's Paradise which modern psychology and the experiences of war have shattered, proving how infinitesimal and impotent is the part played by reason in human affairs and the human mind. What, then, when we have stripped away all that is doubtful, have we, at the very barest, got left ?

I fall back nearly twenty-three centuries to the Greek philosopher's definition of happiness as "The exercise of vital powers along the lines of excellence, in a life giving them full scope."* Energy, activity, production ! In the exercise of vital powers alone, I am convinced, can the highest happiness be reached. But those powers must run along the lines of excellence. Further, this energy, we are told, must be practised in a life giving it full scope. And that is where the definition of happiness breaks down in modern life. How few among us have the opportunity of giving energy full scope along the lines of excellence ! Think of our city clerks, our mill-hands, our miners, our unemployed, our wealthy

* Aristotle's *Ethics*, Book I, Chapter 7.

pleasure-seekers in Society. How limited is their scope! How seldom can they enjoy the fruition of the highest energy of which their nature is capable!

Let us, however, assume energy in excellence to be the highest possible happiness, and we have no cause to dwell in a Fool's Paradise to practise it. We have, besides, vast fields of emotion that may rise to ecstasy and fulfil the passionate longings that once sought satisfaction in religions no longer tenable by us. These extra pleasures are like flowers radiantly appearing beside the main road of our life. The poet found thoughts that lay too deep for tears in the meanest flower that grows. I am not given to tears, but I find similar thoughts in the commonest objects of daily life—the existence of bread, the uses of fire, the making of pots. On a different level, but hardly more marvellous, are the results of man's genius for beauty—the dances, the songs, the symphonies; village cottages, the Parthenon, the cathedral of Chartres; the drawings of animals in the dark caverns of Dordogne, the illuminated manuscripts of the thirteenth century, the Italian paintings; the ancient ballads, the Homeric poems, the Greek and Shakespearean dramas. Even if we have no energy of genius ourselves, the sound or sight of such beauty can raise us to an ecstasy of wonder and joy.

I need not speak of the overwhelming awe that fills us in the contemplation of an insect's

eye or the unimaginable universe of a starry night. But to rise again from the myriads of stars rushing headlong through unknown space to the myriads of human beings rushing headlong through unknown time over this tiny little earth, consider that commonplace feeling called love ! For myself, the love of mankind, so much extolled, is beyond reach. I cannot emulate Carlyle's Teufelsdröck, who "would take all mankind to his bosom and keep it warm". Chinese, Indians, Africans, French people, Americans, Spaniards, Esquimaux, South Sea Islanders—no, my bosom is not capacious enough for them all. But I do find that wherever I have lived about the world I have come to like the people better, the more I knew them ; and when I remember how we in these islands always begin by hating strangers, that in itself is a miracle.

One also feels a magic in the tie of friendship between man and man, the more magical in that each of us differs from everyone else by shades of difference that may be called as infinite in variety as is all personality. Last comes the peculiar love between man and woman, as common as sunrise, and as marvellous. I have never seen fairies myself, and I cannot now hope to fight with dragons, or to converse with spirits from another world. But I have seen a glance passing across a dinner table, across a church or a concert hall—passing between a man and a woman—quicker than lightning, more distinct

THE FOOL'S PARADISE

than a spirit's voice, cheaper than the wireless, more delightful than fairyland, and promising in course of time to produce an amazing miracle—a living mixture of those two human beings far more astonishing than the liveliest dragon, though bearing no outward resemblance to one.

X

NEW DEVILS

IN the chapter called "Higgledy Piggledy" in Samuel Butler's Note Books, he writes: "Behold and see if there be any happiness like unto the happiness of the devils when they found themselves cast out of Mary Magdalene." I answer that I can find greater happiness in a parable showing deeper insight into human nature. The truth of it evidently struck Christ's followers, for St Matthew and St Luke repeat almost in the same words: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." (St Matthew xii. 43-5.)

Those seven new devils were invited into a house not rotten with sin as poor Mary's, the harlot of Magdala's, was; but a really comfortable residence, clean, swept and garnished, like a suburban villa. One can imagine their joy in their new dwelling, which had previously been

NEW DEVILS

inhabited by only one unclean spirit and so gave all seven opportunities for the temptation of a purified convert into at least seven deadly sins. I am sure that Samuel Butler would have admitted I was right, and I wish I had put the case before him. For the corruption of a respectable citizen is a devil's most delightful task, and we may imagine the joy of seven, each representing one of the seven deadly sins.

XI

WONDERS

I DO not know the number of words used in the English language. Even the *Smaller Oxford Dictionary* does not, I think, attempt to count them up. They tell me that working, uneducated people habitually use only about 850 as "basic English". But in the language as a whole there must be as many as 60,000. I can understand and frequently use many thousands of them, and in addition I know many French, German, ancient Greek and Latin words. How is it that my brain can store up this enormous number, separately as in minute pigeon-holed cupboards, ready to be brought out at will with extreme rapidity? It is still stranger that the will sometimes, especially in old age, refuses to bring out the word. I cannot speak or write it. I seem to have forgotten it altogether. But the strangest problem of all is that, if I cease trying for the word or thinking about it, it suddenly emerges from its minute hole or partition and enters quite clearly into my consciousness, even though my mind appears to be entirely occupied with some quite different subject, and nothing has happened to recall the word which had obstinately refused to appear at the right moment when wanted. If only I were a

psychologist I could illustrate this peculiar action of brain and will, so secretly at work, by a parallel. I have known termites, which always work in darkness, suddenly and without warning bring down an African mud hut, scatter it in dust and let in a flood of light, very disturbing to themselves and the inhabitants of the hut. Does thought, then, go on working like termites in the dark ?

Why are ghosts always regarded as dreadful, dangerous, and horrific ? One of the sweetest, gentlest, most generous women I have known died some years ago, but no one will sleep on her bed or in her room. The Zulus think the dead hang about the kraal or on the hut's roof for a long time in the form of serpents. Do they suppose that all the dead whom they knew so well in life become hostile and venomous in death ? The shudder that even the most loving of our friends would feel at the sight of our ghosts adds another terror to death. If one single ghost would explain that he came with no evil intent but in love and charity, many survivors would sleep more easily.

Some modern astronomer has conjectured that our little Earth, old as she is, might yet explode into triple size and heat and become a "Nova Stella", burning itself back in course of time to its present size and heat. One can imagine the astronomers in Mars watching with intense interest while all mankind shrivelled up, all our splendid buildings crumbled into dust,

all our forests blazed for a while, and all our philosophies, religions and literatures faded in thin smoke—Platonism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Shakespeare, Goethe, and all the poets, curling away as steam, to be no more studied or practised. Astronomers do not shrink from foretelling such despair. All that may come about, and there is no appeal. Yet on the bare chance that this little earth will not thus be extinguished, we continue to labour after knowledge, and torture ourselves to follow virtue.

“*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.*” It is a felicity which I can never hope to reach. Knowledge of causes in nature was entirely excluded from my education, and so I shall never know what oxygen and hydrogen are, or how in the Great War the Germans could isolate one of them for the construction of explosives, nor how an eagle can move in circles against or with the wind without a movement of its wings, nor how music produced in Vienna can be heard in my suburban bedroom, nor how a few hardly visible scratches on a revolving disc can sound like a lonely flute or an angel’s song, nor how the wheels of a locomotive spin round and pull forward or back an enormous train, nor how the black and deadly serpent of a Yorkshire stream purifies itself of stench and poison in a few miles of its course, nor how mice and lions reproduce mice and lions in their own inside, nor what makes the earth turn round and drives the Universe

through space. All these matters of interest and value are hidden from me for ever, though some of them might have been known if I had learnt knowledge of them in place of Greek.

But the very word "Greek" suggests objects of wonder, more wonderful than all that natural science could have taught me. "Man" was the answer to the oracle's ancient riddle: "What walks on four legs, and on two, and on three?" and the Chorus in the "Antigone" sang that "Many are the marvels, and there is nothing more marvellous than Man." Or take a paragraph from a letter written by Imaum Ali Zade to a friend of the Layard who dug up the monstrous bulls of Nineveh and enquired about scientific knowledge:

Listen, O my son! There is no wisdom equal to the belief in God. He created the world, and shall we liken ourselves unto Him in seeking to penetrate into the mysteries of His creation? Shall we say, behold this star spinneth round that star, and this other star with a tail goeth and cometh in so many years? Let it go! He from whose hand it came will guide and direct it.*

It is to Man we must go for our greatest object of wonder—to Man whose common feeling of right and wrong Kant placed on the level of the starry heavens for wonder. When I consider Man, from what he began and to what he has reached, the famous saying does not surprise me. Man, with all his filthy ways, his love of

* Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 163.

murder in war, his lust for rape and robbery—it is not his wallowing in the dirt of vice that surprises me, but his consciousness that somewhere he may reach a firmer ground. As the Lord said to Mephisto at their meeting in heaven :

Ein guter Mensch, in seinem dunklen Drange,
Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst.*

I would go further than the Lord, and instead of a “ good man ” read “ the vilest scoundrel ”. So great a miracle has Man become. The vilest scoundrel is conscious of the better way, just like a migrating bird, who is himself one of those many wonders which are enough to cause my death with astonishment ; and Carlyle in old age defined worship as transcendent wonder.

But after all, when I have exhausted myself with wonder I have got no further than Agur, the son of Jakeh, who said so long ago unto Ithiel :

There be three things which be too wonderful
for me, yea, four which I know not : the way
of an eagle in the air ; the way of a serpent upon
a rock ; the way of a ship in the midst of the
sea ; and the way of a man with a maid.†

I would even go one further than Agur and add one more to his four. It would be the mystery of digestion, which keeps alive man and all other living things. A scientific Professor in Oxford once defined man as a digesting

* *Faust : Prologue in Heaven.*

† Proverbs xxx. 18, 19.

tube, perforated at both ends. But though I had no training in natural science, I cannot help observing the enormous variety of things that man and all other living beings put in at one end, and the enormous variety of effects produced on the living creatures and their manner of living. You may completely change the disposition of an amiable dog by giving him raw meat instead of biscuit, and one knows similar changes produced in habits and colour by changes in diet. But let us limit ourselves to Man, of whom the Oxford Professor was speaking. One sees a baby grow or diminish according to the amount or quality of milk supplied to it. A grown man or woman will swell to a balloon or shrivel in proportion to the food and drink absorbed through the mouth and then worked upon by the mysterious process which I believe doctors call metabolism. The Greek word only means change, and it is just that change which seems to me one of the wonders of the world.

It is not only the effect on the growth or diminution of the body that is wonderful. By pouring down food or drink through the throat, there to be mashed up, digested, or metabolized, the whole mind and soul may be influenced, and many magistrates and judges consider drink a palliation for murder. But let me rather describe again the case of a legendary man whom I met when I was staying at Chinon on the Vienne, a tributary of the Loire. It is true he was rather puffed up by his own conceit, but I

may extract parts of what he told me, about thirty years ago :

I do not kill what I eat, he said. Others go to kill, I go to eat, and you must allow me to call my aim more humane and civilized. The English sportsman takes his trophy, scrapes the flesh from the bones and horns and skin, puts in glass eyes, and hangs the mouldering thing over his dining-room door. My trophy I assimilate ; it becomes one with my flesh, it supplies my brain with vitality, it coalesces with my immortal soul. It forms my character, fortifies my will, inspires my virtues. I am myself the museum of my foods and drinks. If I seek my monument, I look in my glass.

I eat round the world, as Pierre Loti makes love, and with more permanent delight. During my holidays as a boy I ate my way through the greater part of France, devouring the crayfish of the Tarn, the sea-slugs of Marseilles, and the lapwings of Brittany in great quantities. Having inherited a considerable fortune upon coming of age, I crossed the Channel and ate faggots on the site of Shakespeare's theatre in Southwark, and bread sauce on the Yorkshire moors, and in Ireland I have eaten seaweed under the name of "Glory be to God". Advancing to Edinburgh, I ate a haggis ; and taking ship to Iceland, I ate strips of whale's blubber for three days. Feeling like an inverted Jonah, I cast up on the German shore to eat blood sausage. Next Eastertide found me on Mount Athos eating the legs of octopus stewed in leeks, and tasting like a line of Aristophanes.

Hardly had I assimilated German thought upon Wiener-schnitzel and Prophetenkuchen at Halle University than I took ship for Delagoa Bay in East Africa and devoured green mealies and the boiled heads of slightly putrefying cattle among the Swazis. Proceeding to Australia, I ate the dull white caterpillars which the natives draw with thorns from the holes in trees. In Malaya I devoured the fruit Durian, the very stench of which is almost fatal. On the same journey I visited China to eat the glutinous birds' nests, and passing through British India, where I secured ghi, goor and atta, I entered Persia to devour the tail of an Astrakan sheep. As I crossed Egypt in search of the potted crocodile supplied to the British garrison, I heard of the unknown antelope-zebra just discovered by Sir Harry Johnson in Central Africa. I hurried to Mombasa, but the animal had been already slaughtered in the interest of science, falsely so called. My only compensation would be to discover a surviving specimen of the Giant Sloth in Patagonia and eat it.

In the Old World, there is only one thing I regret. I have eaten bear's feet and elk's nose and camel's hump ; I have eaten hotch-potch and yak's tripe and lamb's eyes, and wild boar basted with port wine. I have eaten Greek halva and Spanish liquorice, and the little cakes that Turks cry down the street at two in the morning. Of birds alone I have eaten ten kinds of duck, four kinds of plover, three of larks, and of storks, cranes, herons, bitterns, flamingoes, ortolans, thrushes, nightingales, and quails, a great

number. Just one thing I regret. I have never eaten the symbolic cake with which English people observe the solemn fast of Good Friday.*

What an explorer! What a metabolism! If such varied diet had helped to nourish his brain, I expected to find an intellect beyond compare since Shakespeare's. But, except for his narrative, he seemed to remain quite an ordinary Frenchman, growing a little stout.

But marvellous to me as are the effects of diet and digestion, I have this year (1935) been told of a natural process that appears to me more marvellous still. It was concerned with the functions of the pituitary gland upon which Professor P. T. Herring addressed the Section of Physiology at the meeting of the British Association in Norwich, on September 9th. I had heard of the pituitary as a small gland controlling the mucous and phlegm, but Professor Herring described it as exercising functions far wider and more vital. As reported in *The Times* of September 10th, he said that the gland possesses a very peculiar blood supply, which ensures that a varying amount of its secretion may be carried directly into the neighbouring region of the brain, while the rest is thrown into the general circulation after the fashion of secretions by other ductless glands.

The list of the functions attributed to the pituitary has now become long and formidable.

* *On the Old Road through France to Florence*, by Hallam Murray, Henry W. Nevinson and Montgomery Carmichael, pp. 35 seq.

One function regulates growth, causing dwarfs or giants ; another controls the growth and ripening of the sex-organs ; another causes the mammary glands of female mammals to secrete milk ; and the gland itself exercises an indirect effect on all the remaining ductless glands in the body, acting as a stimulator on the thyroid gland and others, "so that it may justly be called the 'master gland' of the interlocking directorate of ductless glands". Professor Herring is reported as further saying that the pituitary gland is an essential part of the mechanism whereby the hypothalamus is enabled to carry on and control its vital activities, and he had already explained that the hypothalamus is an important, if not the main, site of integration of the basic activities in the life of all vertebrates, such as metabolism, temperature, emotional reactions, sleep, mating, and reproduction. The Professor went on to state that the pituitary gland is an essential part of the mechanism. The pituitary and the hypothalamus, being contiguous in the brain, act by mutual exchange of hormones, and the Professor concluded by expressing the view that the pineal body, on the upper face of the same region of the brain, is probably another glandular component of the same working unit of which the pituitary and hypothalamus are important parts.

To this the representative of *The Times* added an interesting note, saying :

It was abundantly clear, after listening to Professor Herring's address, that very great progress had been made in recent years in finding a material basis and site, if not for the soul, at least for human temperament and the temperamental foundations of personality, which hitherto had been a stronghold for the upholders of vitalistic or transcendental views of human nature.

That famous philosopher, T. H. Green, of Balliol, used to warn us against the use of the words materialist and transcendental, I suppose because they are vague and likely to be scornful. But the wonder to myself in that address and the comment is how one little gland can have such power of variation as to influence the human temperament and the temperamental foundations of personality among the myriads of mankind, past and present, if we admit that the personality of each man and woman in the human race has always been in some degree separate and different from every other human being. How is one gland, described to me by one who had seen it, as a thin red line, to effect by its form and secretions the innumerable differences that are obvious in any British crowd, much more in the hosts of Indians or Chinese, not counting the incalculable hosts of the dead since animals could be called mankind? Would any cutting or piercing or nurture of that little gland have converted me, for instance, into a Jack-the-Ripper or a Plato? If the midwife

WONDERS

had so constricted the soft skull of Shakespeare or Napoleon at birth that his pituitary gland would have functioned differently, would the temperamental foundation of personality have been so affected that neither Shakespeare nor Napoleon would have existed as we knew them ? Such questions fill me with wonder.

XII

AN ENGLISH REVOLUTIONARY

ON February 9th, 1933, I was in Westminster Abbey, joining in the Memorial Service to John Galsworthy, who had died on January 31st. Many conspicuous writers were there, and many other lovers of English literature. Many politicians, too, including Ramsay MacDonald, then Prime Minister, though he had left the Labour Party for reasons which seemed to him wise. My seat was in the South Transept, and exactly opposite were a few blood-relations, with the widowed Ada Galsworthy, very white but outwardly self-restrained, being an English lady suffering the extremity of public grief.

The high-pitched roof of the ancient church itself was darkened by its height, but the choir and screen shone with gold and other recent adornments as though defying age. The Dean and Canons in heavy copes and vestments thickly embroidered with gold also defied age by reviving an English ritual to which three recent centuries had been indifferent. They thus strove to display the English perpetual union with Catholicism, in spite of Rome's repudiation of their Orders. As it was an English church, all was decent, orderly, and free from mysteries incomprehensible to many. All

the music was from Bach, as befitted the memory of the lover of music whom we celebrated. Of peculiar beauty and fitness was a chorale with a perpetual accompaniment running through it in undertones without change.

The service ended, the Dean spoke a few excellent sentences upon a great writer's work and influence. The gorgeous procession of copes and vestments filed out ; the writers and friends exchanged greetings and condolences, and by the " Poets' Corner ", which all revered, however few knew a line of their poetry, the crowd emerged into the subdued light of a foggy winter's afternoon, looking upon the Houses of Parliament, the Bridge, and the yellowish river pouring to the sea.

We had been celebrating, not only the departure of a noble character and a great writer, but the obituary of an age—an age which had lasted for about two centuries and now was crumbling into the ashes of history. One might call it " The Age of the English Gentleman ", for of that age all the world had recognized Galsworthy as the type. Once in travelling with him through Germany to Vienna, and again in passing through Holland to The Hague, I noticed all the bookstalls at the stations and the bookshops on the streets were loaded with his books, though few could have known that he was passing that way. The works of Shaw and Wells were there, too, but Galsworthy's books exceeded those of the other two most

famous writers in English. I wondered why it was, for, like everyone else, I admire the other two almost equally in different moods. But I was told by all the inhabitants that Galsworthy was most valued as describing the highest type of the "English Gentleman", and as being of that type himself. "You see, we all admire the English Gentleman," they explained, and that was a startling pleasure to me. I dimly remembered hearing of the admiration bestowed on the "English Lord", because of his manner of travelling, his rumbling coach, his fine horses and valets, his supercilious air, and his contempt for all foreigners and un-English languages : but this reverence for an English gentleman, who was not even a Lord, but only a writer such as any Frenchman or German might be, and sometimes has been, that astonished me and upset my balance of appreciation. Naturally I was proud that our three best writers in English were the most famous abroad, but I was astonished, remembering how few of the best writers in French, German or Italian were read among ourselves, even in translations.

The splendid tradition of the "English Gentleman" abroad was promoted chiefly by the fame and genius of Byron ; but he was an aristocrat, and I suppose no other aristocrat has displayed genius comparable to his, or has won such fame by his works, or such adoration by his character ; for adoration is not bestowed merely for good behaviour and moral conduct.

He won it by genius, a wild extravagance of behaviour, and a passion for freedom. But the typical English Gentleman of last century was not necessarily an aristocrat, spacious, as Hamlet said, in the possession of dirt. He was usually reared in a country house or manor, surrounded by pleasant gardens and a few fields, large enough to give exercise to two horses and half a dozen little dogs, and to supply a minor sport in killing rats, rabbits and an occasional pheasant escaped from a neighbouring estate. In his family there was usually a military tradition, illustrated by pictures of Waterloo and Indian campaigns hanging in the stone-flagged entrance-hall, side by side with a few stuffed heads of deer and buffalo, and perhaps a "record" pike, preserved for his weight. Amid such surroundings the young gentleman grew up with considerable knowledge of wild birds and beasts, dogs, horses, gardeners, stable-boys, and the neighbouring gentry of his own class. At the fitting age he was sent to one of the great Public Schools, if his father could afford it. There are said to be about 150 schools in England now, claiming the title of "Public", which would mean "Private" in any other nation; but there are only about half a dozen whose names carry social prestige. At the Public School he acquired at least two characteristic English virtues—obedience to orders and customs however absurd, and silent endurance of the pain inflicted with canes or birch-twigs by the masters

and elder boys. Such punishments are perhaps aimed at accustoming boys to the endurance and infliction of brutality when they rise to positions of authority among inferior races. Notorious instances of such brutality in Egypt and India will occur to everyone, but even so, I have known British brutality towards "natives" far exceeded by Dutch, Portuguese, and Russians, who have no Public Schools.

Passing on to the old Universities, the English Gentleman acquired a knowledge of "good form" which became the one commandment of his life. He would break all the Ten Commandments of Moses rather than commit the smallest breach of Good Form, and he frequently did. "Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not bear false witness" were the only two of the Divine Ten which he could be counted upon not to break. "It isn't done", and "It isn't cricket", were only variations of "Bad Form", and the code under that head was wide and hard. It might even include the penalties of social boycott and exclusion from a Club. In various forms we see it illustrated in Galsworthy's play of "Loyalties" and the novels, *Maid in Waiting* and *Flowering Wilderness*. To defy the Gentleman's commandment of Good Form might ruin a fine and beautiful life beyond redemption. The offence was too bad for hanging, as the old Greeks used to say of unpardonable crime.

The least sign of cowardice in a Gentleman was a sin that knew no forgiveness, but a suspicion of corruption was equally abhorrent. It was only by a reputation for absolute honesty that the Empire held together. To refuse gifts, to keep one's promise, to fulfil a bargain, had long been the qualities of the English Gentleman, and there was none so valuable, so widely recognized throughout the world. Lose honesty and we lost all. Some years ago, in trekking through a little-known part of Central Africa, I wanted some eighteen or twenty tribesmen as carriers. I had nothing obvious to give for pay, but I named so many yards of "cloth" as wages on my return, and no one of those black savages hesitated. A dim tradition of Livingstone and the English reputation carried me through. Ethical Professors may sneer against "the best policy", but I have found the English reputation for honesty very useful, and even profitable in extremity. I was also helped by the remote legend of Livingstone's superb faithfulness, for I was passing through his country, and his name was still like a god's.

In a letter to *The Times* (April 27th, 1935) Mr Lovat Fraser, writing in defence of George IV, told us it was that unpopular and much abused King who asked of someone: "Is he a gentleman? Has he any Greek?" In these days, when even the great Universities are inclined to abandon Greek, the question sounds strange and I can hardly discuss it; for at my ancient

Public School we regarded Greek as the only thing worth learning. But it seems to me just possible that the luxurious King, so little praiseworthy in most characteristics, may have been right in this. It may be that from Greek the English Gentleman unconsciously acquired certain habits or rules in his code of "Good Form". At the very root of all Greek life and intellect stood the Delphic motto "Nothing too much!" There must be nothing exaggerated, nothing excessive or hysterical; and that reticence and self-control were the deepest attributes of the English Gentleman. From him could come no raving, no rhetoric, though there was place for eloquence under strong emotion, especially when denouncing injustice or cruelty.

Also the Greeks allowed little, if any, talk about oneself. No boasting or bragging, no self-praise. There was a noble Greek word, *αἰδώς*, meaning modesty, the reverse of exuberance in speech or behaviour. That was one of the finest qualities of the English Gentleman, and we feel it in every page that Galsworthy ever wrote. No English Gentleman ever detested publicity more. As an instance, I remember when I was driving with him and Mrs Galsworthy from The Hague to Rotterdam after a big conference of the P.E.N. Club, of which he was President, it happened that our private car had outrun the main body of members by about half an hour when we reached the Town Hall, and on the steps we

found a body of photographers waiting in the broiling sun. Of course I knew that it was only for Galsworthy that they were waiting, and, being by profession sympathetic with all journalists, I urged Galsworthy time and again to get out by himself and save the journalists loss of time. I urged him with all my persuasion. I even got out myself in the hope that he might follow. But he sat back in the car, and nothing would induce him to move till the whole party had come up with us. I thought his modesty was exaggerated, but it is the only instance of exaggeration in him that I can remember, and that was an exaggeration of modesty—an error I have seldom found in other writers.

Like all English Gentlemen, he hated speaking in public, especially if he had no opportunity for preparation; and he never in my remembrance used a gesture of any kind in public or private. Yet, when he had to speak as President of the Club, he spoke with extraordinary success, definitely, concisely, and with a shade of subtle humour which perhaps only the English could thoroughly appreciate. For there was nothing excessive about his humour. It never raised boisterous laughter, but at most the "smudge of a smile", as the Scots call it. He spoke very quietly, his fine head and figure hardly moving, his long, straight mouth compressed, his grey eyes steady, but humorous and kindly, too.

Nearly all his plays and novels deal, as in modern times they must deal, with the love

between men and women, and in many of them the situations are difficult, not to be smoothed over. But the same quiet decency and self-restraint are always preserved. Readers of popular modern novels have described his works as cold-blooded or passionless, because there is nothing dissolute or pornographic in any of them. Their popularity is all the more surprising, for the love of bawdry is universal. Certainly it has not diminished during the last forty years, and it blots out the interest of almost every other subject. Yet, owing to his trained and habitual sense of decency, the English Gentleman seldom talks indecency, and Galsworthy never wrote it. Many thousands of readers miss it in his works, yet even in countries where an amorous scene is expected in every novel, Galsworthy's circulation is immense. That is hard to understand, unless indeed novel readers are growing sick of casual copulation, however alluringly described.

In *Flowering Wilderness* there is a concise summary of the English Gentleman's beliefs. Dinny, the most charming and lovable of Galsworthy's creations in womanhood, except perhaps Mrs Pendyce, suddenly asks :

Are you a Christian, Uncle Lawrence ?

No, my dear, if anything a Confucian, who, as you know, was simply an ethical philosopher. Most of our caste in this country, if they only knew it, are Confucian rather than Christian. Belief in ancestors, and tradition, respect for

parents, honesty, moderation of conduct, kind treatment of animals and dependants, absence of self-intrusion, and stoicism in face of pain and death.

That is in fact a summary of the English Gentleman's creed. But there is another quality, or rather condition, which we must add, and that is a certain scale of property. The mere education of the English Gentleman at a preparatory school, a Public School, and one of the great Universities would probably cost his father more than £2,000 in all. That is a sum beyond the dreams of a working man's salary, or even of a clerk's or a shopkeeper's. If a man was not born into that expensive class, and had not been able to associate with others of the same, he might possibly fall down an unfathomable gulf to the level of that admirable person, a "nature's gentleman", but the descent was hard, nor would he allow himself or others to forget it. The Gentleman must have become possessed of property up to a certain level before he could associate on equal terms with gentlemen. If his income was derived from land, either in town or country (that is, from rent paid him by tenants), so much the better. But a highly successful barrister or physician, or the Head of a College, might enter the social circle, and so on rare occasions might the writer of a popular novel, or the painter of a picture much talked of at the Royal Academy show. For it must not be

supposed that the class of Gentleman as a whole was devoid of culture.

The successful City man, the Company Promoter, or a speculator might also reach the confines of Gentlemen. And officers in the Army and Navy were there by nature. So perhaps were the Clergy ; at all events, in the country we used to be told that " The cloth will take you anywhere ", meaning that a parson would not be rejected from the Squire's table, or even from the Duke's, if he knew how to behave. When Bob Smillie, leader in a great Coal Strike, was coarsely abused by the High and Mighty on a Royal Commission, he bravely retorted : " I am not a gentleman ; else I could answer you ! " No finer retort was ever made.

It was among these Englishmen and Englishwomen that Galsworthy laid nearly all his scenes. He belonged by birth and nature to that class, and describes them with minute exactness—the diminishing class that lived in beautiful country houses, hunted and attended races, played tennis and cricket, travelled abroad, and was seldom uncomfortable. They wore a dinner jacket for dinner even when at home, but a long tail-coat, white waistcoat and white tie when out for dinner or a party. Their external life is briefly described by Karel Čapek in his *Letters from England* :

Tennis and warm water, the gong summoning you to lunch, books, meadows, comfort selected, stabilized, and blest by the centuries, freedom of

children and patriarchal disposition of parents, hospitality and a formalism as comfortable as a dressing gown.

The most beautiful things in England are the trees, the herds and the people ; and then, too, the ships. But old England comprises also those rosy old gentlemen who in the springtime wear grey top hats, and in the summer chase tiny balls over golf courses, and look so fresh and nice that I should like to play with them if I were eight years old ; and the old ladies who always have some knitting in their hands and are rosy, nice-looking and kind, drink hot water and never tell you about their ailments.*

That is an exact picture of the English Gentlemanly class to which Galsworthy belonged, and with which, readers, especially foreigners, associated him. Only one point is missed ; that is, the way the well-to-do Gentleman made the necessary money. This is explained by Galsworthy in faithful descriptions of Board Meetings and Committees of Directors in the beginning of *Strife* and *The Forest*, and of the landowners in *The Skin Game* and *The Free-lands*. After the Directors and Boards one naturally comes to the workers, the labourers, the men and women who do the real work of the world, and it appears to me that this is the point at which this great artist failed.

He failed from ignorance. No one calls the English Worker a Gentleman, except in mockery or from a politeness that is half mockery. No

* *Letters from England*, pp. 83 and 170.

one can know the working man without working at his side, and unfortunately Galsworthy never had the chance of that. He did not know poverty from childhood as Carlyle and Dickens knew it. His pictures of "the Poor" as in *Strife*, *Justice*, *Fraternity*, and a few other works, are sympathetic and invariably kindly. He is always on their side—the right side, for the working man is always and necessarily right. But directly Galsworthy touches the working people we feel that he writes without personal knowledge. The women in *Justice* or *Strife* do not speak or act in the least like the working women one has known. The savages in *The Forest* are more true to life as I have known them.

One may imagine Galsworthy living the regular life of the typical English Gentleman till he was thirty, or a little over. Then, perhaps owing to some disaster or grave perplexity, he discovered there are other classes in the world, and the discovery almost overwhelmed him. Like Swift he did not appreciate the workers in mass, though he liked them separately, especially if they were grooms, gardeners or gamekeepers; for those he could understand. But the passion of pity overcame him when he thought of the workers who have no hope of entering upon life as he saw it, and could never enjoy it to the full, holding both hands before the fire of life. Remaining the English Gentleman to the last, he could not alter his nature—"As though the

emerald should say, whatever happens I must be emerald," as Marcus Aurelius said. For the working classes he felt the same sympathetic pity as he felt for dogs and horses, and it was pity that moved him to revolution.

It may seem absurd to call such a man a revolutionary. The typical English Gentleman can have small sympathy with revolution. His one fear in life may be that revolution is falling upon his country as upon others in Europe. Surely Galsworthy, being an English Gentleman, was "a Conservative dyed in the wool", as one famous critic has indeed called every member of his class. Born among the wealthy classes, supplied from boyhood with every comfort and advantage, at a Public School and Oxford, intimately acquainted with horses and dogs, an experienced traveller for sport and pleasure, a welcome guest in Society, handsome, strong, a good athlete, married to a lady of remarkable beauty, charm and intelligence, a writer whose works brought him wealth and a vast popularity throughout Europe, possessing two houses of singular beauty in position and design, the central figure and President of a great international Club containing many of the best dramatists, novelists, and essayists, yet he must be reckoned as one among our greatest revolutionists. He must be ranked with Byron and Shelley, not as a poet but as a revolutionist.

To establish this high claim would take long. It would involve an analysis of all his works and

an exploration of all their hidden or half-buried satire. For abbreviation let me remind readers of a short and terrible dream published in the posthumous volume called *Forsytes, Pendyces and Others*. The scene is entitled "The Gibbet", and is dated during the four years of the Great War. The sketch is not long—only three and a half pages, but a few extracts must suffice. A dreamer is walking along an interminable street, and at every door he sees the figure of a young man starting forth; all have a hungry look on their almost invisible faces which watch him hungrily as though looking for someone. As no one answers his questions, he turns back along the street and notices that every lamp is now lighted with a greenish glare, as with lumps of phosphorescent matter hung up in the dark. Some distance ahead he saw a sort of greyish whirlpool stretched across the street under one of those lamps that flickered like a marsh light. A ghostly sound as of swishing feet among dry leaves, deepened by the gruntings of some deep sense satisfied, arose. Creeping forward, he perceived that the gathering was made up of human figures whirling slowly round and round the lamp in what seemed to be a dance. Every other figure of those dancers was a skeleton, and between every two skeletons danced a young girl in white. The girls who danced had a wan, pitiful beauty, and their eyes were turned to the skeletons as though begging them to return to life. Above

their heads, below the greenish lamp, a dark thing was dangling. It swung and turned there like a joint of meat roasting before the fire. It was the fully dressed body of an elderly man.

If those hungry skeletons, the dreamer continues, and wan-grey girls haunted and amazed me, much more haunting and gruesome was that dead face up there with the impress still on it of bloated life; how it gripped and horrified me, with its dead, fishy eyes, and its neck thick-rolled with flabby flesh, turning and turning on its invisible spit to the sound of feet swishing in dead leaves, and those grunting sighs. What was this ghostly revenge on the gibbeted figure which yet had a look of cold and fattened power? Who was it they had caught and swung up there, like some dead crow, to sway in the winds of heaven? What awful crime towards those skeleton dancers and pale maidens could this elderly man be expiating?

And I remembered with a shudder how those young men had looked at me as I passed, and suddenly it came to me: I was watching the execution of MY generation. There it swung, gibbeted by the youths and maidens whom, through its evil courses, it had murdered.*

That was the revolution which Galsworthy was watching—a revolution not only in the Great War, but in the whole of Society which by the satire of his books he had contributed to condemn, overthrow, and execute, till it hung

* *Forsytes, Pendyces and Others* (1935), pp. 183-6.

AN ENGLISH REVOLUTIONARY

on the gibbet with its fishy eyes and its neck thick-rolled with flabby flesh. So it was that the admired English Gentleman combined in himself the revolutionary power to hang his own class on the gibbet, turning round and round like meat on a spit.

XIII

A STAGE ARMY

IN December, 1905, just before the outbreak of the revolution that failed in Moscow, I was driving over the snowy plains of central Russia on a visit to Tolstoy. In a sledge, with a German to interpret for the peasants, I started from Tula, one of those desolate towns widely scattered over the great plains varied with pine and birch forests ; and after a struggle against the snow we came to a typical Russian village of one long street with about forty cottages on each side, all built of wood, thatched, and separate from each other. Two of the cottages were shops, and one an inn for the sale of vodka. A wattle shed was attached to each cottage for stores and fodder, but as it was winter all beasts lived inside the cottages to share the warmth of the huge stove, half of which projected into their partition.

In one cottage my driver had friends, and so I was invited in to thaw and enjoy the warmth. The furniture was a wooden box, which was offered to me as a seat of honour, a short wooden bench, a table, a wooden cradle hung from the ceiling and rocked up and down instead of from side to side, and a small wooden loom, on which both the husband and wife could weave a coarse

woollen stuff dyed with red madder, just like the petticoats on Achill Island in County Mayo. A few brown plates were stuck on a shelf, and the peasant women called them red, or pretty, the word for red and pretty or beautiful, being the same ; so that instead of translating the Krasnaya Square in Moscow as the Red Square, as we always do, we should perhaps translate it the Beautiful or Splendid Square.

As we sat warming ourselves there by the stove, in each deep cave of which a child or two were lying, the door opened against the blizzard, and an old man with a sack on his ragged back came in without knocking. Though obviously in the very sink of poverty, he was not a professional beggar, but only one of that large class of peasants who are driven by age or misfortune to go round the villages seeking for scraps to keep them alive till better times. So he came in as for a friendly call, laid his bag on the table with its mouth wide open, and joined in the conversation on the weather and the neighbouring villages. When he was going out again, the peasant woman slipped some squares of black bread into the mouth of the sack as though by stealth, and he took it up and walked away without further remark on either side. That was then the manner of Poor-law Relief in Russia, and it seemed to me the perfection of appeal and kindness.

The whole incident reminded me of a tale in Greek history, when delegates from Samos came

to Sparta begging assistance for war, and spoke eloquently upon their need. Whereupon the Spartans said, "You have made too long a speech. We have forgotten the beginning before you came to the end." So next day the petitioners brought an empty wallet and threw it down in the middle of the Assembly, only saying, "The wallet is empty." "Will you never stop talking?" said the Spartans. "We could see for ourselves it was empty." The Russian's petition was better, for he said nothing at all.

In his *Letters from England* Karel Čapek, the charming satirist, humorist, dramatist and all manner of wonderful things, speaking of our country, says, "Here the people always manage to help each other, but they never have anything to say to each other, except about the weather." I believe that to be true. Lately, a window cleaner fell from a sill on an upper storey close at my side and broke his skull. Instantly people gathered to help, some to stanch the blood, others to run or telephone for an ambulance, and all with hardly a word spoken. Lately also, owing to illness, I have fallen twice in the street, and workmen seemed to spring from nowhere to lift me up, dust me down, dab the blood with their handkerchiefs, and support me home; all with scarcely a word and with no thought of reward or even of thanks. If a man, woman, or child, is seen struggling in deep water, someone on the bank is pretty sure

to plunge to the rescue, even at the risk to his own life.

We are not the only race prompt to help, but we do it instinctively and without fuss or screaming. On the field our men will help the wounded, even against the Army Regulations. But what should we do if one of our two million unemployed knocked at the door and came into the sitting-room as though paying a call, only laying his sack open upon the table among the ornaments and flowers in vases? The wise and prudent would probably advise him to apply to the nearest Committee for Public Assistance, or perhaps to the Charity Organization Society, where his character would be examined and his past minutely raked up to see if he were "a deserving case". Anyone who stealthily slipped food into the open sack would be blamed by the Economists for "anti-social" conduct.

Perhaps justly blamed; for doles, pensions, and charities have been created, partly to still the cravings of pity, partly to avert social revolution. The number of benevolent Societies established in England is sufficient to support Karel Čapek's description of us. They must far exceed the number of our sects, which used to make the French satirist smile, and they are all devoted to the one purpose of help—to help the blind, the deaf and the lame, the sufferers from consumption, cancer, or rheumatism, young servants, old seamen and old soldiers, trawlers in the North Sea, stray dogs and homeless

cats, persecuted victims of tyranny in Russia, Germany and Italy, musicians and writers out of work, ancient monuments and beautiful landscapes, the old men and women without trees to sit under, boys and girls without playgrounds—the list might be widely extended.

And the purpose of all is help, usually private help, which means subscriptions or personal attention, or both. Let anyone who has a post-box and an income above the limit for taxation, say if I exaggerate. I know that I, whose income has always been small, have my letter-box crammed full twice a day with appeals for help. That Societies should always hope to get subscriptions out of small people like me shows how widely the belief in English helpfulness extends.

And it extends far beyond the limits of our own neighbourhood or our own country. Sydney Smith, himself a model of helpfulness and liberal generosity, once grew a little tired of the typical English rôle. When, in 1823, it seemed likely that England would have to go to war in defence of Spain, in a letter to Lady Grey he asked: "Why are the English to be the sole vindicators of the human race?" And in a following letter he showed himself even more weary of our kindliness to the world in general:

For God's sake do not drag me into another war! I am worn down and worn out with crusading and defending Europe and protecting mankind; I *must* think a little of myself. I am

sorry for the Spaniards—I am sorry for the Greeks—I deplore the fate of the Jews; the people of the Sandwich Islands are groaning under the most detestable tyranny; Baghdad is oppressed—I do not like the present state of the Delta—Tibet is not comfortable—We have just done saving Europe, and I am afraid the consequence will be that we shall cut each other's throats.

How like the present times was his protest and his fear! Exactly the same protest was made to myself when I was invited to the Foreign Office to describe the atrocious system of slavery then (1904-5) prevailing in the vast Portuguese colonies of Angola and the Gulf of Guinea Islands. After listening, the official enquired: "Do you expect us to act the policeman for the world?" I could only reply: "Yes; I thought that, in the matter of slavery, that was what England was intended for." It did not please him, for the case entailed more trouble to the Office, and Sydney Smith might have added another distressing cause to his list of the burdens of England in defending mankind.

I suppose it was the result of a famous libel action (1909), arising out of that slavery controversy, that first opened to me a place as recruit in "The Stage Army of the Good". I so called it in a frivolous moment, and I have loyally served in it ever since, though with much loss of work and time. Too often at meetings and conferences of this Army I had in mind that cruel satire of Matthew Arnold's,

where he describes one of their musters, such as delighted in a dreary passage from Wordsworth's *Excursion* :

O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And last protection, this Imperial realm,
While she exacts obedience, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey ;
Binding herself by statute to secure,
For all the children whom her soil maintains,
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth.

In comment the great poet and critic proceeds :

Wordsworth calls Voltaire dull, and surely the production of these un-Voltairean lines must have been imposed on him as a judgment ! One can hear them being quoted at a Social Science Congress ; one can call up the whole scene. A great room in one of our dismal provincial towns ; dusty air and jaded afternoon daylight ; benches full of men with bald heads and women in spectacles ; an orator lifting up his face from a manuscript written within and without to declaim these lines of Wordsworth ; and in the soul of any poor child of nature who may have wandered in thither, an unutterable sense of lamentation, and mourning, and woe !

Yes, we can see it all. We who have recruited in the Stage Army of the Good can see it all. I dare not claim to be a child of Nature,

yet I am as much Nature's child as Matthew Arnold was, and I love my foster-mother as passionately as he ever could. Time after time I have been present at those Army musters and reviews, not only in dismal provincial towns but in gay London itself, and I know the startled shiver that passes over the audience if anyone among them attempts to introduce a touch of fun or irony. The House of Commons is much the same in outward appearance, but being engaged upon less serious business, it welcomes the poorest joke and bursts into uproarious laughter.

But what has always struck me with most surprise in the Army musters of the Good is the identity of the ranks. Whatever the place and whatever the cause, there are certain soldiers who are almost sure to be present. That was why I called them "The Stage Army of the Good". For in a stage army there are certain persons who go round and round, disappearing behind the scenes for a time and then appearing upon the stage again, though perhaps in different uniforms, and perhaps to defend a different cause for warlike exercise. So, in the Stage Army of the Good, I soon came to identify every officer and large numbers of the privates; for they were nearly always the same, no matter what was the cause of the muster or mobilization. I, too, was frequently in the ranks, and sometimes in an official position.

There they came, one after another, the old familiar faces, the men with bald heads or grey, the devoted women whom it would be invidious to describe. "The world is out of joint," I used to sigh to myself; "O cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right!" To imitate the benevolent Sydney Smith, I could cry: "Italy is aggressive; Abyssinia lives in terror; Germany is brutalized; Ireland is divided; Russia is controversial; Japan is bellicose; China sells little girls as housemaids with a chance of rising to harlots; the Jews are persecuted; America slumps; men and women are still being hanged; civil liberties are being threatened; the Act for Humane Slaughter is only partial; the Goyt valley is to be flooded; the Styhead Pass and Honister are to be mechanized; Mardale is a reservoir; a railway is to desecrate Cader Idris; a motor-road is rending Church Stretton in twain; old windmills need preserving; Waterloo Bridge has the bones of its beautiful skeleton dispersed over the Empire; seabirds' wings are clogged with oil; and the County Councils, the Borough Councils, the Municipal Councils and the Houses of Parliament will have it so. Only our tiny Stage Army of the Good is left to set it right."

Certainly the Stage Army is tiny, else one would not know nearly all its members by sight or name. Perhaps it need not be very large, for one reads that the great cities of the Plain

would have been saved from destruction if, at Abraham's intercession, even so few as ten just persons might have been found in them. But even ten were not found, and now the Dead Sea where the cities stood yields potash and other commercial salts. Even in the Army itself the flame of enthusiasm sometimes flags. Lewis Hind, writer, art-critic and wit, once took to living in one of the Army's outposts in a god-forsaken district of London, and he said to me : " How jolly this place would be but for the poor ! " Another of equal mind and culture said : " I hate the Lower Classes ! " And a third uttered the most damning sentence of all : " What should we have to do or say or write about, but for the poor ? "

I think the country clergy, scattered over the land in their beautiful churches and well-kept vicarages, must feel much the same when they return from their respite in London's hell. What hope is there for the labour of conversion upon the Squire and his comfortable family ? Or even upon the Arcadian villagers, who remain indifferent to religion, or go to chapel ? Service in the Stage Army of the Good may by paradox be called " perfect freedom ", but it is hard, exacting, and usually cheerless. Matthew Arnold's description, and Wordsworth's depressing lines, almost bad enough to rouse the House of Commons to laughter, come terribly close to the truth. The idea has been lately expounded that, by the help of mass-production and

machines, enormous amounts of surplus wealth might be so distributed that each of us could live at the rate of £1,000 a year. I suppose herrings and other fish would not then be thrown overboard to keep up the price, nor wheat and coffee be burnt as now. A population with an average income of £1,000 a year would give immense relief to the Stage Army of the Good. What divisions of societies it would dissolve ! What platoons of secretaries it would disband ! What treatises in Economics we should be spared ! We should all be like Russians, but with incomes raised beyond the dreams of Collective Farming. No more Committees in dismal provincial towns ! No more recitations of Wordsworth at his worst ! A £1,000 purchasing power for everyone ! The Labour Party could agree. Our Economists need no longer research, or marry for the propagation of little Bluebooks.

But, as we saw, the Stage Army of the Good is always short of numbers and short of supplies. The enemy confronting them is strong in the three incalculable forces of custom, law, and property. I doubt if the Army numbers one per thousand of the grown-up population. Yet foreigners notice them as distinctive of our race. So let us now remember what our little Army has actually accomplished against the odds of all this opposition. Children have been prohibited from working in the pits, and boys from cleaning the chimneys by climbing them ;

compulsory education of an elementary but slowly advancing kind has been imposed ; the half-time system is abolished ; nursery schools and Infant Welfare Centres have been progressively introduced ; democracy by the franchise has been vastly extended ; the State Regulation of vice is much diminished ; drunkenness has been reduced by the limitation of hours ; Penal Reform has been pushed forward ; and efforts for general peace have been promoted by the League of Nations Union and the Balkan Committee. Perhaps the hardest fought and most complete victory has been won by the prohibition of Slavery within the Empire. It is not a bad record to be inscribed on the drums of so small an Army, and each of these victories has been won in the face of opponents strong in Parliament and commercial or landowning interests.

Lest it should be thought that Matthew Arnold, by critical cynicism and quotation of Wordsworth at his worst, should have damped the courage of the Stage Army or dissuaded high-spirited youth from recruiting in it, let each member lay to heart lines of Wordsworth at his best. They are from *The Character of the Happy Warrior* :

But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad, for human kind,
Is happy as a lover ; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired.

A STAGE ARMY

And in the same poem, that mild and magnificent poet calls upon each warrior in our Stage Army to hold before him the ideal of his happy warrior :

Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast.

So the little Stage Army, vigilantly keeping watch o'er man's mortality, moves in circles but, like a spiral, ever upwards, remembering that "another race hath been, and other palms are won". But if I seem to have harped too much on Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold himself would stand at my side, for that noble-hearted poet whom he quotes had no more discerning and faithful admirer.

XIV

THWARTED

“THEY made me the keeper of the vineyards ;
but mine own vineyard have I not kept.”
(The Song of Solomon, i. 6.)

It is a sad lament, uttered by any woman who has watched other women pass from her care into the happiness of love. But it is also the lament of many journalists who have spent their lives for livelihood in writing leaders and reviews when they might have been composing great dramas or poems or novels. It is the lament, too, of many superb executant musicians whose mere fame has thwarted their power of creation. They have kept the vineyards of other people, but they have not kept their own.

XV

ROMANCE

EVERYONE knows and loves those exquisite lines in the "Ode to a Nightingale" :

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears among the alien corn.

Exquisite lines, well befitting the whole of that exquisite poem. But they prove beyond question that Keats had read the Book of Ruth carelessly, and with no understanding. Ruth was not sad though she was a widow, her husband having died in Moab. That was her native land, but her husband, with whom she had lived ten years, was a Jew, coming from Bethlehem with his mother, Naomi, his father Elimelech, who died in Moab, and a brother. Both the brothers married Moabite women, and when both died Naomi was left without husband or son, but with two daughters-in-law on her hands.

She determined to return to her own people in Bethlehem, and urged both her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab among their own kin. One of them agreed to remain, but the other, who was Ruth, made a fine and unusual promise to cling to her mother-in-law till death, no

matter in what land. So they went together to Naomi's old home at Bethlehem. There, as was natural, they found a kinsman of Naomi's dead husband, a very wealthy landowner, named Boaz, and, with the consent of her mother-in-law, Ruth went out to the harvest-field to glean after the reapers. In one of his fields Boaz, finding out their relationship, gave his harvesters orders not to molest her, but to leave many ears of barley for her gleaning. So she went home carrying a fine lot of grain, well content at heart with her day's work. Then, Naomi, being a widow and anxious for her daughter-in-law's advantage, devised a clever little plot with which Ruth fully agreed, since Boaz had shown her kindness and was a wealthy relation of her mother-in-law's late husband. Naomi knew that Boaz would sleep that night in the threshing-floor after the barley had been winnowed, and he had enjoyed a good supper. Willingly, again, following her suggestion, Ruth stole softly into the threshing floor, and uncovering the feet of Boaz, lay down beside them. The natural result, foreseen by Naomi and Ruth, both being widows, was that, after certain preliminaries of Hebraic law, Ruth and Boaz were happily married, and in due time she became the mother of Obed and great-grandmother of David. One might imagine that her wild Moabite strain revealed itself in David and Solomon, the most beautiful lyric poets of the Jews.

That is the plain story as told in our Biblical version of the Hebrew narrative. Keats, having read it carelessly, or having heard it read to him in a dreamy mood, embellished it with touches of pathos that add immensely to its poetic value. We have no reason to suppose that the widow Ruth was sad at heart, though she had lost her husband after ten years of married life. She certainly was not sick for home, for she had firmly resolved to make her home wherever Naomi went to live, and she was now with Naomi in Bethlehem. Probably she did not stand in tears, for Boaz, the owner of the harvest field, had been exceptionally kind to her, guarded her from the natural rudeness of his men toward a youngish widow from a foreign land, and gave her the chance of gleaning much more grain than was usual. But by his embellishments the poet adds a romantic beauty to the story which did not exist in the original, and fixes on our minds a picture of the young woman as charming as it is false.

The poet's treatment of the subject raises the whole question of history and romance. How far may a modern poet or novelist depart from a record of tradition in order to embellish it with a modern pathos or romance of which there is no trace in the original? Scott has done it with general sincerity. Tennyson has done it with far less sincerity and far less advantage. Many modern biographers have exercised their imaginations in conjecturing

conversations and emotions to increase romantic interest by making their characters talk or feel as the writer thought they probably would. Such wayward and unfounded embellishments certainly add pleasure, as Bacon said the admixture of a lie will do, and as Keats added greatly to the pleasure of his Ode. They may even drive us to seek out the truth in the original documents. The only question is whether the truth of reality is better than the truth of romance.

When one of our imaginative novelists described the dome of St Paul's as standing in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and further on in the same book described it as being built under William and Mary, it was of no great consequence except that the puzzle of dates might confuse a child. A similar example of the difference was given me by an Irish poet who found a man lying dead drunk in the street, and asked him where he lived. "I live in the Poddle," was the reply often repeated. "But you can't live in that filthy little stream, no better than a sewer," said the kindly poet. "Sure, then," was the answer, "is it history we're tarkin'?"

The drunkard dreamily perceived the difference between fact and romantic art. It is a fortunate capacity of man, to remember pleasure better than pain. One of the Jewish writers said a woman in travail forgets her pain directly afterwards and thinks only of the joy in having a child to carry on her life. Maeterlinck,

in his latest book, *Before the Great Silence*, goes so far in paradox as to write, "Many of the living begin to live only from the moment of their death. The majority of the living weary us, or are strangers to us. We truly know and love only the dead. So long as a man is alive one does not know what he is or what he will do. We have unwavering confidence only in the dead. We are the graveyard of our dead."

It is the same with our own dead past. We remember only the joys of it. Those earliest climbs among mountains, with what ecstasy we recall them! We forget the fatigue, the hunger and thirst, the sore feet and the danger. In war we remember only the glory and triumph: we forget the abomination, the killed, the killing and the blood. It is the same with our first adventures in love. How exquisite they were! How they transformed the world and ourselves! We forget the difficulties, the risks, the anguish of uncertainty, the fear lest we should be too daring, or not daring enough. We illuminate the dead events and the dead people we have known, all of which events and people have become our present selves; for without them we should be nothing. Critics tell me that Carlyle's *French Revolution* is here and there inaccurate. That does not matter to me. The book remains one of the most truthful pictures ever painted; for it is all illuminated by the poetic mind. It may have been the same with Keats, or perhaps with all great poets. In every

ROMANCE

detail Keats departed from history. He was inaccurate in every point. Does that matter much? He has created Ruth—a lovelier and more lovable woman than is found in her history. Somewhere in the heart of the dullest Professor you may find a longing to kindle the spark that we call romance, for without that spark research and even life itself would not count for much.

XVI

MIND SPONTANEOUS

I CANNOT remember or imagine a time when music was not "running in my head". Often it is just the last music I have heard—a commonplace popular song caught from street musicians, or some folk-ballad that continues repeating itself. Or it may be parts of a well-known Beethoven Symphony, such as the Fifth or the Seventh. The sounds continue without my will or knowledge, unless at times I deliberately stop to reflect what music it may be. Whether a song or a symphony, it is sounded to perfection in tune and harmony, but in complete silence. It sounds only in the silent mind without my will or effort, or even against my will. Sometimes I grow conscious of it and the insistent repetition becomes a bore. I even keep certain tunes ready to overcome it and take its place, while it gradually sinks again into unconscious sounds and repetition. The unconscious and often troublesome music may continue throughout a whole night of sleep, so that when I wake it is still "running in my head", just as it left off.

But what movement of the brain is it that continues this silent music, sounding it to

perfection, though I am no singer? I suppose it is something like the rapidly passing thoughts that have no outward expression, but yet take form inwardly in words. I have spent time in trying to think without words, but have found it impossible. I have watched native savages seated in the sun, and apparently, like the "Jolly Young Waterman", thinking of nothing at all; yet their minds were working in words, however simple the thoughts may have been.

But how about dogs? They have a kind of language expressed by various barks and howls. But they have not enough variety of barks and howls to express thoughts, though in dreams they will utter sounds that seem to signify the joys of hunting or fighting. The lion roaring after his prey certainly has a language, but he seems to have silent thoughts that cannot be expressed by roaring. Lower still we come to the "mute fishes", which have no language at all, but are moved by certain thoughts or instincts of hunger and sex, which to all seeming cannot be expressed outwardly or inwardly. It appears that they are on a higher level than man, for man cannot think or enjoy music without the aid of silent, internal ghosts of words and sounds.

In total darkness, without a glimmer of sun, moon, stars, or lamps, my eyes are illuminated by a series of the most brilliant colours, sometimes as a chaos without form, sometimes

in circles and other geometric forms, or as crowding jewels upon black velvet. These are quite involuntary, and I do not attempt to call them up. They come and go like radiant ghosts, without desire on my part, and usually against my will, but no effort will stop them.

Almost as puzzling to one who is no psychologist is the sudden and uncalled-for appearance of places I have known at various times of life. I have travelled more than most people, but there seems no reason why, suddenly and without connection with anything I have been doing or seeing or thinking, one place rather than another should suddenly appear before me so vividly that I almost feel I am in reality there again. In this I have no choice and make no effort. Baghdad, Loanda, Peshawar, Tiflis, or Waterford—it makes no difference which, and I cannot fix on one or the other. Nor does it matter whether I have been happy here or unhappy there. My past makes no difference to the uncalled-for and involuntary vision. Sometimes I am conscious of the peculiar smell which every place possesses; but the vision alone, in brilliant sunshine or gloomy storm, is the commonest appearance. It is like a mirage, but it may appear to me in the most commonplace suburban home, whereas I have never seen a mirage except in a wide expanse of wettish desert under a hot sun; the best vision having

MIND SPONTANEOUS

occurred to me just east of Palmyra in the Syrian desert. It was so vivid and realistic that I urged my driver to go towards it, but he said he had always seen it there, and there was no water at all in what seemed a large and beautiful lake.

XVII

DOUBLE PERSONALITY

As has been only too obvious throughout, I was, unhappily, born too soon to learn anything about psychology or economics. I must leave economics as a battle-ground for warrior professors who in turn lay each other dead upon the field. But I wish a psychologist would explain to me how it is that I am always conscious of a double personality. It is not merely that, like St Paul and most people, I am torn between opposite motives and actions. I see and feel and realize myself as two different people, sometimes exposed to different fates and sufferings. One finds the same perception of double existence in poetry and in art. For instance, in the old "Ballad of Otterbourne", Douglas says :

But I hae dreamed a dreary dream
Beyond the Isle of Skye,
I saw a dead man win a fight,
And I think that man was I.

Or take the similar verse in "A Shropshire Lad" (XXVIII) :

Here the truceless armies yet
Trample, rolled in blood and sweat ;
They kill and kill, and never die ;
And I think that each is I.

One of Rossetti's pictures, called "How they met themselves", shows two lovers passing together through a wood, and suddenly they face themselves. They are exactly like themselves in form and dress and gesture.

Another verse in "A Shropshire Lad" tells (XX) :

But in the golden-sanded brooks
And azure meres I spy
A silly lad that longs and looks
And wishes he were I.

In the familiar Freudian jargon I suppose that would be called a "Narcissus complex", but it is exactly the reverse ; for here it is the silly lad in the reflection that longs to be the silly lad upon the solid ground.

I have heard that some philosopher, perhaps Adam Smith, taught that each of us puts up or entertains an "impartial spectator" in himself, who watches and judges each thought and action of the person who gives him free hospitality ; and a terribly critical lodger he must be. Perhaps William James had a similar idea in his "Great Companion".

But the double personality who haunts me is no mere spectator or reflected Narcissus. He is my actual self-double. Perhaps our psychologists would call him my duplex-complex, as their manner is ; or they might go back to their favourite classics and call him my "Dipleidōlon". It reminds me of an occasion when a physician

DOUBLE PERSONALITY

put a small electric lamp in my mouth and showed me in a glass the interior of my head, all alive and at work. It was more terrifying than any ghostly turnip hollowed out by boys and illuminated by a candle inside. On a far higher and even mystical ground stands a passage in the poem "The Dark Lady", by that true poet and admirable man, the late "A.E." of Dublin :

No man will ever know
The mystery of his being, of multitudes
Within one spirit. Yet I knew from the first
That they were with him, incorporeal real,
Taking immortal bodies from sweet sounds,
Leaping into our thought, as the gay moon,
A slippery dancer, reels from wave to wave.

XVIII

BODY AND MIND

LOVE is proverbially blind, but the poets have not told us with such insistence that he has lost all the other senses as well as sight. Otherwise no marriage would last more than a week-end.

In a well-known passage (*Tale of a Tub*, Section VIII), Swift wrote : " Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse." If he had watched a little longer he would have beheld a bag of carrion, which in life had been animated by marvellous unconscious activities of circulation and digestion.

By good fortune and further exploration he might have discovered a clean and well-jointed skeleton. A tall but uncomely woman once told me, " You can have no idea what a beautiful skeleton I shall make ! " But she was cremated.

As she spoke I remembered the " Shropshire Lad's " lines :

Wanderers eastward, wanderers west,
Know you why you cannot rest ?
'Tis that every mother's son
Travails with a skeleton.

What a relief it is to think that all the dandies, revellers and roués, who once strutted

and flirted upon the Steyne at Brighton, are clean skeletons now. The Diarist Creevy wrote : " Prinny has let loose his belly, which now reaches his knees." Yet many women admitted him to their beds. For he was Royal and the " First Gentleman of Europe ". Think what endurance, what submission to horror, what pious loyalty they displayed ! How tightly closed all their senses must have been ! If love has that power of closing them, he must indeed be omnipotent. Is it possible to retain a shimmer of love beneath flesh so loathsome, even when love shuts all the five senses ? The body is the outward and visible expression of the soul. No separation is to me imaginable.

Once, at a Northern sanatorium, I watched men wallowing about in a medicinal swimming-bath. There was one whom I naturally called " Hippo ", for he possessed the qualities I had observed in the hippos of Central African rivers—the laps of fat, the smooth and shiny hide, the jagged teeth, the small eyes, the square and brutish skull. Yet I had no doubt that his brain contained a power beyond the capacity of any hippo in sensation, consciousness of life, and even in a kind of intelligence. He was, in fact, a highly respected clergyman.

So it appeared to me that even the Prince Regent, or George the Fourth and his associates, as described in *Brighton* by Osbert Sitwell and Margaret Barton, might have reached a degree of mental energy that in a hippo would have

BODY AND MIND

amazed any anthropologist inquiring into primeval times. The marvel is, not that the intelligence of our human hippo is low, but that it exists.

In the same way I am overwhelmed at man's consciousness of virtue, but the foulest vice does not astonish me at all. The existence of enough decency to stimulate vice is evidence of our greatness.

XIX

RHYTHMS

AFTER listening to a quintet by Arnold Bax in the rooms of that exquisite pianist, Harriet Cohen, I was asked by Mr Clifford Bax, who wrote the moving drama on the death of Socrates, what I thought of it. I replied that I could not understand it at all, and could carry away no sense of beauty or emotion from its excellent performance. "That," he answered, "is because you are not accustomed to his rhythm." The answer set me thinking of the established composers of whom I did know something by sound—men like Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert. By long experience I certainly could recognize any of them almost for certain and at once, just as Heine tells us he could say at once : "*That* is the finger of Goethe." Is there, then, in the mind of every great composer and every great poet a special rhythm which distinguishes his work from that of every other, perhaps equally great in his own rhythm ?

Let me go back to the Greek origin of the word. I read in the *Lexicon* that the word *ῥυθμός* originally meant any regular or vibratory motion or sound, used for prose as well as verse, especially of measured time in motion, as in dancing or marching, like Virgil's *in numerum* ;

so, to keep time or quicken time ; so, to mean measure, proportion or symmetry ; and so further to imply a state of mind or soul or temper, self-restraint, and even a wise or restrained way of doing things. It seems to be connected with *ῥέω*, to run like water, and the Latin *ruo*, which is usually more violent, as in "ruin".

Taken in its first and simplest meaning of regular or vibratory sound, the most obvious example is the drum, the effect of which is almost magical. In West and Central Africa I have heard the huge drum (*ochingufu*) made of a large block of wood scooped out inside, booming for miles through the forest, and rousing the savage tribes to ecstatic dances, men and women in long rows dancing all night under the full moon. The mere rhythm of the repeated throb moves them either to love or war. Tennyson uses the right word in his line, "Where the war drum throbs no longer." In great modern music we feel the drum's rhythmic effect as in Handel's "Dead March", in Chopin's "Funeral March", in the *Presto* of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and in the *Allegretto* of the Seventh Symphony, where the rhythmic throbbing of the double basses and drums is heard solemnly continuing through the sudden transition into a lovely melody of life. So in our own regiments the names of past victories are inscribed on the drums, and early in the Great War I observed a sergeant rouse his wearied and hard-driven

men by beating on a meat-tin with a piece of firewood. Major H. J. Gillespie, R.F.A., even created a band on the salient at Ypres to encourage his men in their continuous peril. The instruments were mainly mouth-organs, but the effect on his men's morale was remarkable.

It seems strange that in Milton's description of Satan's army on the march he should have omitted the drum and substituted quieter instruments for the marching music :

Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders ; such as raised
To highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle ; and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat ;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. (*Paradise Lost*, I, 550.)

There we have the fullest effect of the Greek *rhuthmos* as given in the Lexicon—a moral or mental effect. But mere repetition, as of the drum among primitive peoples, may have powerful mental effect also, for it causes the men and women to leap up and down and clap their hands hour after hour without moving from their place, but with amorous pleasure and freedom from care.

Similarly, in old days before the reforms of Kemal the Ghazi, I used to watch the dervishes

in Constantinople and Albanian towns whirling round and round to no music but their own howls until they were overcome with an ecstasy perhaps religious. But for the best instances of rhythm I think some movement in place is needed. By rhythm of onward movement under simultaneous strokes of the oars a 'Varsity eight moves, and when Ouida told us her hero in the eight got in two strokes for each stroke of his crew, we admired his prowess but doubted the boat's success. The rhythm of troops on the march is so strong that as they approach a bridge the officer should give the command "Break step!" otherwise the regularity of the moving feet together will make the bridge sway till it falls. The perfectly drilled platoons of Grenadier or Coldstream Guards marching to the Bank every evening are a fine example of rhythm, but if they were kept marking time for half an hour the effect would be ridiculous rather than rhythmic. As a supreme example of men moving forward on the march we may go again to Milton's account of Satan's army mustered in hell. The passage is almost as familiar as it ought to be ("Paradise Lost", I, 576 ff.) :

Though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroick race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar Gods ; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son
Begirt with British and Armorick knights ;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,

Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisonde,
Or whom Biserta sent from Africk shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia.

In youth I was forbidden to dance, since dancing was one of the very numerous avenues to hell, and when in late middle age I was induced by Cecil Sharp's example to learn Folk-dancing, I practised the patterns to music with unequalled delight. But practise as I would, I was still told by the best of all dancers that I danced too much like a soldier—left, right; left, right—being accustomed to march to the beat of the drum, and unable to break myself of the habit of counting to the regularity of the music, like a bad musician who hammers out Bach without any variation of the rhythm of time or stress.

For perfect rhythm some variety is needed. Take the instance of the pulsing of the heart, so often given as an example of rhythm. Even a healthy heart is liable to sudden and strange variations. Great emotion will make the pulsing stop, or may drive it to and fro, as we say, "My heart was in my mouth," or, "My heart was in my boots," showing great variety of movement and place. Or take the lines from "The Ancient Mariner": "Fear at my heart as at a cup my heart's blood seemed to sip." There is generally something fluid and variable in rhythm, as might be expected through its

derivation from the Greek word for "flow or run like water". This is seen in the waves of the sea, in which the third or seventh wave is usually the most powerful. I am told that the waves of light are never quite regular. So in high waterfalls like the Staubach, or Lodore, or the fall at Aber, you may notice that the water never falls in one unbroken spout, but always in irregular gushes or veils that fall faster than the rest of the water. It looks as though the earth herself gave little jogs at the summit of the fall, and set the water into those rapid gushes or veils. Or, to take a domestic instance, if you see the surface of a deep bath apparently quite calm and still, and you make ever so small a ripple on the surface, you may watch the water run away with irregular and increasing spasms or waves till it hastens down the drain with a final gurgle, which always reminds me of the final squabble on a philanthropic committee.

Even a wave hangs for a scarcely perceptible second before it crashes, and good soldiers or dancers rise for a second on their toes before, at the word of command or the note of music, they launch away. The value of a similar pause or poise is felt, for instance, in one of Wordsworth's lines, in his poem to Collins: "For thee suspend the dashing oar," which is an imitation of one of Collins's own lines representing the pause of the oarsman as he "comes forward" before he plunges the oar into the river. For a perfect

use of rhythm take the last two lines of "A.E.'s" poem, "The Dark Lady" :

Leaping into our thought, as the gay moon,
A slippery dancer, reels from wave to wave.

And even a dead pause of silence may give a beautiful effect, as the "Ancient Mariner" says : "But O, the silence fell like music on my heart." Among the later works of Beethoven, as in the Ninth Symphony, suddenly a brief silence falls as though the waves at sea were stilled.

An unexpected pause or irregularity has evidently been valued by our great poets, and by great prose writers as well. If it is missing for a long space, we feel the want of it. Even in Ruskin, master of prose, we sometimes feel the want of it, especially in his earlier work. We feel the cadence accumulating like the movement of a great wave, and for many lines ahead we know how the cadence will run and end. But let me take an instance from his latest work. On his seventieth birthday I had the glory of staying in the same inn with him at Sallanches in Upper Savoy, when he was composing his final Epilogue to *Modern Painters* (1888). It ends with the beautiful sentences :

The laws, the life, and the joy of beauty in the material world of God, are as eternal and sacred parts of His creation as, in the world of spirits, virtue ; and in the world of angels, praise.

The cadence or rhythm sounds to me just too perfect, too certain in its balance and regularity ; too much like the anticipated and rhetorical cadences of Mr Gladstone's perorations.

In verse also there may be an almost excessive sweetness of rhythm, as in much of Swinburne. For instance, take those familiar lines from " The Garden of Proserpine " :

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever ;
That dead men rise up never ;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Or take the sweetly pretty verse from the sweetly pretty poem called " A Match " :

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath,
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

In which verse one may observe, besides the sweetness of the rhythm, how fortunate it is that " darling " has a word to rhyme with it. So, too, I have known a country-dancer move all too sweetly, with gliding feet and eyes upturned

to heaven, as though to say, "Look how elegant and soulful I am! There's nothing rough or countrified about me."

But the greatest speakers, poets, and prose-writers have an unconscious way of breaking the expected rhythm with some little shock or irregularity, and our present-day poets and musicians appear to find a conscious delight in violent defiance of rhythm, no matter what sense they may wish to imply. I am told that the recent poets who choose "free verse" employ it as an escape from the regularity and sweetness of the English ancestral forms, and yet seek a certain rhythm of their own. Certainly, after a long draught of Swinburne's sweet sacramental wine, it is a relief to come upon such a passage as this from Walt Whitman, the supreme poet of "free verse" in English :

Away, O Soul, hoist instantly the anchor !
Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every sail !
Sail forth—steer for the deep waters only.
Reckless, O Soul, exploring, I with thee and thou with
me,

For we are bound where mariner has not dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

Such irregularity is fine, corresponding with the thought, but in more recognized poets one may find irregularities apparently intentional, as in Shakespeare's

O Mistress mine, where are you roaming ?
O stay and hear ! your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.

Or take an instance from Shelley's "The Question" :

And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves wandering astray.

Or the sudden change of rhythm running through the verses of Blake's "Night" :

The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine ;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Or from Matthew Arnold's "Margaret" :

Who order'd that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd ?
Who renders vain their deep desire ?—
A God, a God their severance ruled ;
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

So, too, in Folk-dancing, the best dancer sometimes makes a little slip as if by intentional forgetfulness or sweet perversity. And authorities in feminine adornment tell me that the undulating "perms", as in an advertisement, may be too regular and permanent.

Comparing the rhythms of music and poetry, one may easily find passages that suggest the

old-established divisions of sonata or symphony. The spirit of the opening *Allegro* of the Pastoral Symphony, for instance, may suggest Folk-songs such as "Blow away the morning dew", or "As I was a-walking one morning in May", or "It's dabbling in the dew makes the milk-maids fair", or "At the sign of the Bonny Blue Bell". Or, for a perfect pastoral *Allegro*, take "Paradise Lost", IX, 445 :

As one who long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight ;
The smell of grain or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound ;
If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seemed, for her now pleases more ;
She most, and in her look sums all delight.

Observe even in those pleasant lines the break in the measure in the line beginning "Or dairy . . .".

And for the second or *Andante* movement one may take the slow sad lines in Tennyson's "Lotos Eaters" :

Hateful is the dark blue sky
Vaulted o'er the dark blue sea.
Death is the end of life ; ah, why
Should life all labour be ?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.

Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil ? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?
All things have rest and ripen to the grave
In silence ; ripen, fall and cease ;
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

If we insert a *Largo* in place of the *Andante*,
we may take "Paradise Lost", III, 40, over-
whelming in slow melancholy :

Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of Even or Morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summer's Rose,
Or flocks or herds, or human face divine ;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful waies of men
Cut off.

As parallel to this second movement, *Andante*
or *Largo*, in Folk-dance, one may witness "Step
Stately", so lovely in its variety of quiet
movement that one hopes it may never end.
Or one might choose the Wheatly Processional
Morris. "Hunsdon House" might be called a
Largo, but it is naturally the Minuet, which in
verse might also be expressed by Philip Sidney's
lovers' involutions :

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for another given.

And for the *Scherzo* or *Trio* we have to hand
Robert Bridges' Triolet :

When first we met we did not guess
That love would prove so hard a master ;
Of more than common friendliness
When first we met we did not guess.
Who could foretell this sore distress,
This irretrievable disaster
When first we met ? We did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master.

There is something of the *Trio*, too, in the
final lines of John Suckling's

Why so pale and wan, fond lover ?
Prythee, why so pale ?

Quit quit ! for shame ! This will not move ;
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her ;
The devil take her !

In usual form the sonata or symphony ends
with an *Allegro*, perhaps working up to *Presto*,
paralleled by Browning's " Up in a Villa, down
in the City ", with the closing verse :

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear ! Fowls, wine, at
double the rate,
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil
pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not
the city !
Beggars can scarcely be choosers ; but still—ah, the
pity ! the pity !

Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with
cows and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding
the yellow candles ;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross
with handles
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better
prevention of scandals ;
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, tootle-te-tootle the
fife.
Oh, a day in the city square, there's no such pleasure
in life !

In the Folk-dance one may find a parallel to the increasing speed of this *Presto* in " Brighton Camp " (Morris), or in " Parson's Farewell ", in the final movement of which we reach such a *Presto* that, colliding once with my opposite man, I was left gasping, and he, flat.

The definition of " rhythm " showed that the Greeks applied the word to prose as well as verse. For the brief, sharp, but noble rhythm of prose, one may instance almost any passage in Swift, as in the Sixth of the *Drapier's Letters*. But let us take at random a few lines from " Gulliver " in Chapter V of the *Voyage to the Houyhnhnms*, where Gulliver is describing the state of Europe to the innocent Horse, and speaks of war :

Sometimes a war is entered upon because the enemy is too strong, and sometimes because he is too weak. Sometimes our neighbours want the things which we have, or have the things which

we want, and we both fight, till they take ours or give us theirs. It is a very justifiable cause of war to invade a country after the people have been wasted by famine, or destroyed by pestilence, or embroiled by factions among themselves.

Or again :

For these reasons, the trade of a soldier is held the most honourable of all others ; because a soldier is a *Yahoo* hired to kill in cold blood as many of his own species who have never offended him, as possibly he can.

Or :

And to set forth the valour of my own dear countrymen, I assured him, that I had seen them blow up a hundred enemies at once in a siege, and as many in a ship, and beheld the dead bodies come down in pieces from the clouds, to the great diversion of the spectators.

For these passages we need not seek parallels in music or in verse, but in realities which most English people have known uttered by the terrible rhythm of time.

In the examples of rhythm in poetry that I have chosen I have confined myself to the poets of the great Shakespearean and Victorian ages in our literature, because I was born too soon to appreciate the rhythms of the most recent school of poets. As Mr Clifford Bax said to me about his brother's music, I do not understand their rhythm. It is the same with most recent music. When I was stationed for some weeks

in Cologne after the Armistice, in 1918, I went almost every night to excellent concerts given by the best musicians. The music was almost always "modern", and I came away unsatisfied, almost in despair, like a child to whom a task far too difficult had been set. So, too, with "modern" poetry. I feel that in the course of time I might understand that rhythm, but it would take me many years, and few years are left.

There remain the pulsing rhythm of the earth, and what the Greeks called the rhythm of life, by which I suppose they meant the recurrence of joy and sorrow, of activity and ease (each always longing for the other), of yielding to temptation, which saves us from the monotony of good behaviour, and of good behaviour, which saves us from the tedium of repeated sin. They also spoke of proportion or order in life as rhythm, in accordance with their motto, "Nothing too much", and to them it was a state of mind or temper—self-restraint, and even a wise way of doing things. But those ethical conceptions would lead us far.

THE GADFLY OF FREEDOM

As I was lately reading John Drinkwater's admirable book upon *John Hampden's England*, and the equally admirable *John Hampden : a Life*, by Hugh Ross Williamson, two scenes rose to my mind. One was of a Sunday in summer just when this century was entering into its 'teens. During the night I had walked from Wendover to Prince's Risborough along the edge of the Chilterns, sleeping for a time among the beechwoods, and in the morning had called upon the John Masfields, who were then living in a flint-faced cottage close beside Great Hampden Common. The scattered village stands on the high plateau from the edge of which, looking south-west, one can see over the Vale of Aylesbury to Thame, Watlington, the Dorchester Clumps, where the Thames joins the Isis, and the hills of Shotover and Cumnor between which Oxford lies just hidden. It is a finely typical view of English country, little altered hitherto from one century to another.

As it was Sunday, Masfield and I walked in the evening to the ancient church which stands close to Hampden House, where the Earl of Buckinghamshire was living, and we followed the old church path across the fields. Through

one large field it runs between two rows of lime trees of no great age or size ; but I noticed that at the very heart of nearly all, just above the bare trunk, a large tangle of twigs had been formed, so thick as to look impenetrable. To me it seemed a sort of cancer, and I wondered if a sharp axe could clear the growths away as a kind of purge. I compared them to the overcrowding novels which even in those days were threatening to stifle English literature, but it seemed perhaps best to leave all to grow together until the remorseless axe of time would free the life on which they fed.

But the man at whose side I was walking was young, and his youth gave me hope. Except to the few who take the trouble to watch for the first gleam of poetic power, he was then unknown. No mortal creature would have taken him for a jolly Jack tar. His thoughtful light brown eyes, smallish and refined features, slim but active frame, deep and rather melancholy voice, and his exact but wide-ranging knowledge of all that is best in our literature made the truth appear farcical. I was indeed overawed by his past career, as I always am in the company of one who has known hard reality. He had been through the training of the *Conway* upon the Mersey, had sailed around the South American coasts, had washed pots in the saloon bars of New York, and worked with the carpet weavers in Yonkers on the Hudson. So genuine an education had

raised him to the status of a working-man, and had delivered him from a poet's perils of finicking, precious, and esoteric themes and far-sought expressions. A whole class of illustrious poets have passed through a similar hard apprenticeship. We cannot say anything for certain of Homer's youth, for the scholars inform us that, like a cat, he had five or seven lives. But we know a good deal about the grave activities of Æschylus, Sophocles, Dante, and Cervantes, and what little we know of Shakespeare's youth tells of hard stress and lowly employment.

As to Masfield, he was then about twenty years from the Laureateship, and he told me he had to write three or four books every year for livelihood. He was then at work upon the strange life-story of a random old poacher, boxer, and general ne'er-do-well, to be told in verse. I said I hoped not in blank verse, for blank verse suggested a vain attempt to rival Milton; or in "free verse", which was then just opening a door to untrammelled and watery facility. He answered No. He could not attempt blank verse, and he would not try "free verse", though he recognized the natural desire of young poets to seek for a new form of expression, and perhaps a new harmony. His poem was to be in rhymed couplets, and I thought to myself that Pope would be as hard to equal in couplets as Milton in blank verse. But "The Everlasting Mercy", that extended

his fame among all serious-minded people, was coming to birth in that tightly compressed head at my side, and if only I had known it, I might have been repeating that great line, "The burning cataracts of Christ," as we entered the church of Great Hampden, surrounded with trees and facing on its north side the pleasant gardens of John Hampden's home. But any such cataracts would have startled that consecrated little building, just as they would have kindled fire in the regulated complacency of St Paul's.

The village congregation took their accustomed seats, and knew by habit when to stand up, sit, or kneel. The service began, and the beautiful sentences of the English liturgy poured over their heads like a comfortably warmed shower-bath. No one noticed the savage ending to the pathetic song of Jewish exiles, "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept," or the dubious reason given in the response to the prayer for peace in our time, or the implication that our bishops and curates were incapable of grace except by the aid of great marvels. The Bible and Prayer Book have long become so familiar in our country that no one notices their beauty, their irony, or their savagery.

Like everyone else, including the clergy, I sank into the semi-torpor of custom, and let the gentle sounds pass over me without attempting to realize their meaning. My eyes and mind

were fixed on the flat monument of blackish stone set against the wall to Elizabeth by John Hampden, "her sorrowful husband, in perpetual testimony of his conjugal love," and recording "the loss invaluable to her tender parents, her nine children, and himself. Yet was herself blest, and they fully recompensed, in her Translation from a Tabernacle of Claye and fellowship with Mortalls, to a celestial Mansion and Communion with a Deity."

John Hampden, whose words of praise were probably more justified than most epitaphs, had, fifteen years before her Translation, brought her to his home from the small manor of Pyrton, which still stands among the fields between Watlington and Thame at the foot of the Chiltern ridge, and she may well have looked forward then to a peaceful life beside a husband endowed with a large and beautiful estate, and fond of country living and all country sports. But within that short space of fifteen years her peace was broken, not only by the pangs and cares of nine children, but, what was far worse, by a husband whose spirit refused to rest satisfied with domestic joys and a country gentleman's natural occupations, which in those days included a refined love of the arts still reminiscent of Elizabethan culture. For Hampden was already twenty-two when Shakespeare died; and Milton, who long survived him and was also to know the Chilterns well, was twelve years younger than himself.

The inscription on the tomb of Elizabeth was probably written by Hampden himself in the heavy language of the day, and I next turned to the elaborate monument set up to him rather more than a hundred years after his death. It was set upon the church wall on the opposite side of the nave at random, for no one knew the spot where he was buried. The record of his virtues, composed in the middle of the eighteenth century, need not be counted on ; but happily, Clarendon, who as Edward Hyde had been his friend before religious and political strife divided friends, has left a long account of his character and personality. He tells us that, even after the troubles had begun, Hampden preserved his natural cheerfulness and vivacity, and, above all, his "flowing courtesy to all men". The well-known account was written by a professed enemy after the Civil War was over, but a few sentences will give an obviously true idea of Hampden's nature :

His carriage throughout that (Ship Money) agitation was with that rare temper and modesty that they who watched him narrowly to find some advantage against his person, to make him less resolute in his cause, were compelled to give him a just testimony. . . . I am persuaded his power and interest at that time was greater to do good or hurt than any man's in the Kingdom, or than any man of his rank hath had at any time ; for his reputation of honesty was universal and his affections seemed so publicly guided that

no corrupt or private ends could bias them.

He was indeed a very wise man, and of great parts, and possessed with the most absolute spirit of popularity, that is, the most absolute faculties to govern the people, of any man I ever knew.

. . . After he was amongst those members accused by the King of high treason, he was much altered, his nature and carriage seeming much fiercer than it did before. And without question, when he first drew his sword he threw away the scabbard. . . . He was of an industry and vigilance not to be tired out or wearied by the most laborious, and of parts not to be imposed upon by the most subtle or sharp so that he was an enemy not to be wished wherever he might have been made a friend, and as such to be apprehended where he was so as any man could deserve to be. And therefore his death was no less congratulated on the one party than it was condoled on the other.

As though to make sure that this praise of his former friend should not be thought unworthy of a Royalist like himself, Clarendon added finally : " His death therefore seemed to be a great deliverance to the nation."

One might have supposed that such a man would be an ideal husband for a temperate and comfortable lady accustomed to decent country society, if only he would have stayed at home like other worthy gentlemen, in the practice of leisurely activities upon his beautiful estate, with a pleasing wife, children, library, pictures, horses and open-air pursuits. But the gadfly

of freedom gave him no rest. It stung him into repeated action in defence or restoration of his country's ancient liberties. He belonged to the Crabbed Youth that chafed against the religious or political indifference, or submission, of their fathers. As a member for Wendover and Knight of the Shire he must needs quit his quiet home among the beechwoods for the increasing turbulence of the King's first three Parliaments, all clamouring against Laud and Arminianism, as I remember good Protestants clamouring against Dr Pusey and the Ritualists for their apparent approach to Rome. But he clamoured even more against breaches of the law that Parliament alone can impose taxation, which lies at the very base of all our liberties. The follies of Buckingham were a further cause of irritation until a crazy assassin drove a knife into his handsome body. The Petition of Right for the redress of grievances ; the expensive and futile wars with France and Spain ; the scene in the House of Commons when members held the Speaker down in the Chair to prevent further adjournment and dissolution ; and then the consequent imprisonment of Hampden's best friend, John Eliot, to rot in the Tower for the three remaining years of his life, during and after which Hampden took charge of his children ; his own imprisonment in the Gatehouse for refusing a forced loan—these steps in the struggle for freedom implied a different kind of

life from the English gentleman's existence in an enviable home.

The wifely Elizabeth had to endure all this anxiety and separation, varied only by child-bearing, until she died after her fifteen years of disturbed matrimony. And hardly had she died when the restless widower plunged into the conflict over Ship Money, by which his service to English freedom is now chiefly remembered. As throughout life, he took his stand upon that basis of our liberties that taxation cannot be imposed without representation. It was the same constitutional principle claimed by the Suffragettes and other advocates for women's rights, nearly 300 years after Hampden's action, and then against the strong opposition of leading Liberals, his natural successors in defence of our rights. The payment of Ship Money was of course as rightful a levy upon inland counties as upon the coasts, and no one could dispute that levy simply because an estate was inland. But the ancient tax was now imposed on the authority of the Crown alone without the consent of the House of Commons. For this reason alone Hampden refused to pay twenty shillings in Ship Money for a bit of his land at Stoke Mandeville, between Wendover and Aylesbury. His trial was put off for nearly three years, and then the case was tried before a Court of judges in the Exchequer Chamber. By a majority of seven to five the verdict was given against him. The payment was never

exacted, nor was the rather larger sum due from the Hampden estate ; but the judgment seemed to legalize the claim of the King to exact taxes on his own authority, and if that claim was to be upheld, the country would be laid under a complete monarchical despotism. Fortunately for our advance towards democracy, the verdict of the Judges was reversed by both Houses of Parliament in 1640.

For the ultimate liberties of the country no case could be more vital, but at the time other matters appeared of more immediate importance, and they followed each other quickly. Such were the Short Parliament, Laud's proclamation of passive obedience and the sin of resistance, the Scots' invasion, the beginning of the Long Parliament, Pym's impeachment of Strafford and the King's abandonment of the one man of genius in his service, the impeachment of Laud, the King's visit to Scotland, when Hampden with five others was sent as Commissioner to watch proceedings, the massacre of Protestants in Ireland, and the Grand Remonstrance in the House of Commons summing up the grievances of the reign. The debate on the Remonstrance lasted all night, and as the parties were nearly equally balanced, it grew so savage that Sir Philip Warwick, who was present as a member, describes it in these words :

I thought we had all sat in the Valley of the shadow of death, for we, like Joab and Abner's young men, had caught each other by the locks,

and sheathed our swords in each other's bowels, had not the calmness and great sagacity of Mr Hampden by a short speech prevented it. He called on them to remember who and in what place they were.

None the less, the Remonstrance was passed by a majority of only eleven, and Cromwell told Falkland afterwards that if it had been rejected he would have sold all and departed from the country.

The Commons then demanded a guard for their House. It was refused, and on the fatal day (January 3rd, 1642) Charles came with his own guard to the House, demanding the arrest of Hampden and four other members, of whom Pym and Holles were the most distinguished, on the charge of treason. He took his seat in the Speaker's Chair, but the five members had vanished, and remarking that "the birds were flown", he withdrew amid cries of "Privilege! Privilege!" He sent the Queen to Holland, himself retired to York, and began the Civil War by raising his standard at Nottingham.

The sagacity and calmness noticed by Sir Philip Warwick were Hampden's natural characteristics till he drew the sword, in Clarendon's words, and threw away the scabbard. His younger friend and near neighbour, Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, of Great Tew in Oxfordshire, has been praised by Matthew Arnold for his "sweetness and light" (a phrase

borrowed from Swift) in the midst of the Civil War. But Clarendon tells us that from the entry into this unnatural war Falkland's natural cheerfulness and vivacity grew cloudy, and a kind of sadness or dejection of spirit stole upon him which he had never been used to :

When there was any overture or hope of peace, he would be more erect and vigorous, and exceedingly solicitous to press anything which he thought might promote it, and sitting among his friends often, after a deep silence and frequent sighs, would, with a shrill and sad accent, ingeminate the word Peace, Peace, and would passionately profess that the very agony of the war, and the view of the calamities and desolation the Kingdom must endure, took his sleep from him and would shortly break his heart.

The close resemblance in mind and character of Falkland to Hampden is obvious. Both belonged to the best type of English gentry, highly educated, refined, gracious with flowing courtesy, and delighting in all the liberal arts with which the Renaissance of the previous century had illuminated Europe. "Ingeminat-ing peace!" The phrase has passed into the language of Liberal statesmen even upon the verge of war. And Hampden also ingeminated peace during all the years before the war's actual outbreak. Falkland, in deep despondency, and with a scholar's torturing hesitation, esteeming compliance with royal authority more binding than love of English freedom,

unsheathed his sword for the opposite side, and, still ingeminating peace, put on a clean shirt (as was his habit before battle) for the day when he fell at Newbury on the Berkshire downs, only three months after the death of his natural but more decisive associate.

Equally sad at heart but more decisive, Hampden had no doubts as to his side in the war. He had already married his second wife, Letitia Vachell, a widow from Coley near Reading, but he never took her to Hampden House. From that quiet home on the Chiltern edge he removed to lodgings in Gray's Inn, and he never returned to see the broad green ride, called "The Queen's", as having been made for Elizabeth, sweeping up to the windows from the distant road. In the first year of the war, when the King had raised his standard at Nottingham (August 26th, 1642), his eldest son John, his favourite daughter Elizabeth Knightley, and a grandchild died, and one of his truest friends, Robert Greville, Lord Brooke, was killed by a random arrow from the tower of Lichfield cathedral. As was natural, malignant enemies regarded these losses as judgments of God upon his rebellious spirit. He was, none the less, occupied in the difficulties of raising and drilling the Buckinghamshire regiment of Greencoats.

The thick long tunics of the regiments at the time varied in colour, like the political shirts of to-day. The rich colonels fitted out their

own regiments with uniforms. Lord Saye's Bluecoats were Oxfordshire, Brooke's Purplecoats were Warwickshire, Denzil Holles used for his Londoners red, and by a providential forecast, Cromwell adopted red for his New Model, as though foreseeing that red would best keep out the sun's rays when British soldiers of the future would be fighting in India and the tropics. But for his horse soldiers it seems likely that Hampden retained the buff leather coats and even the cuirass and other relics of armour. His muster was raised chiefly from the small farmers and labourers of his neighbourhood, and some of them came armed with old bill-hooks and crossbows that had hung peacefully on their cottage walls since the Wars of the Roses, nearly two centuries past. He drilled them himself, with Sir Richard Ingoldsby as his second in command. But in spite of his energetic drilling and his personal popularity, he found the soldiers of the main army that was mustering at Northampton to check the King's advance from Nottingham, so unruly, out of hand, and given to plunder, that he wrote to Essex as his Commander-in-Chief to hasten down from London in support of authority. He was already discovering the truth of his younger cousin Oliver Cromwell's warning to him, given actually on the field at Edgehill, when one wing of the Parliamentary army ran before Prince Rupert's cavalry charge :

Your men, Cromwell had then said to him,
are most of them old decayed serving-men and

tapsters and such kind of fellows; and their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons and persons of quality; do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honour and courage and resolution in them? You must get men of spirit and take it not ill what I say—I know you will not—of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go; or else you will be beaten still.

That was the account of the warning given by Cromwell himself to the second "Conference in regard to the Title of King" (1657) fifteen years after the battle. But in June, 1643, if Hampden recalled the warning, he knew that his cousin Oliver was far away in his eastern counties, wrestling to inspire his redcoated Ironsides with a God-fearing spirit that might match the honour and courage of gentlemen. To quote again Cromwell's words in the same speech before the Conference, he then was "raising such men as had the fear of God before them, as made some conscience of what they did, and from that day forward they were never beaten, and whenever they were engaged against the enemy, they beat continually". Of the power lodged in a God-fearing spirit Hampden on the evening of Edgehill knew little, but he knew the power of honour and courage among his fellow gentlemen, and he had good reason to fear the quality of his own poor peasants with their antiquated armaments in the field. None

the less, he contrived by diligence and discipline to convert them into the formidable and respected Greencoats of the Buckinghamshire regiment.

To one of Hampden's sensitive, courteous, and highly cultivated nature a civil war between men of the same race and habitation was abhorrent, and the traditional English respect—almost adoration—for Kingship, maintained with hardly a break for fully eight centuries, added to the horror. Yet, when once the conflict began, counting the tradition of freedom as more valuable than Kingship, he threw away the scabbard. One might find a parallel to his mental perplexity in Mr Asquith's just before the Great War. He, too, was sensitive, highly educated, naturally peaceful, but when the decisive moment came, he, too, threw away the scabbard: "We will never sheathe the sword." The whole saying is well remembered; it became, in fact, a quotation too often repeated to escape our English irony and detestation of rhetoric. But Hampden did not himself speak of throwing away the scabbard. That was Clarendon's phrase, more than twenty years after Hampden's death.

Like many of the Parliamentary leaders at the beginning of the Civil War, Hampden acquitted his own conscience of rebellion against the Kingship, and even against Charles who had been proved so untrustworthy, by imagining his real object was to free the King from his evil

counsellors. Certainly, the two most dangerous to freedom and to the Reformed religion had gone. Strafford was beheaded, and Laud was in the Tower ; but others of less genius remained. He was not himself a born soldier like Cromwell, but he had enough military instinct to discern that the secrets of strategy are rapidity and surprise ; and now to his other cares and anxieties was added the mortification of serving under a torpid and unenterprising Commander-in-Chief.

Nothing can be more depressing for an intelligent officer than to be pledged to obey such a general. In my own experience as a war correspondent I have seen the effects in loss of confidence, hope, and energy. I have seen similar effects upon a great paper's Staff under a dull and indecisive editor. Essex, whom the Parliament had appointed to command, was of that torpid and hesitating nature. Already, when in occupation of Worcester, he had allowed Charles to slip past him and place himself on the road to London. The uncertain battle of Edgehill followed. Hampden urged Essex in vain to pursue the shaken royalist forces. Charles gave him another chance by withdrawing to Oxford instead of striking straight for London. When at last he did advance as far as Hounslow, he was confronted by a great muster of Parliamentarians on Turnham Green, and began a retirement through Brentford, while Hampden stood at Kingston,

ready in co-operation with Essex to strike his retreating force. But Essex wavered again, and another opportunity of victory was lost.

Winter fell upon the first year of the war, and Essex hung about the Thames and Thame valleys, regardless of Hampden's urgent advice to attack the King's main forces at Oxford. But early in the spring he did succeed in recapturing Reading. He then retired again upon Thame while Rupert from Oxford dashed out with raiding parties into Hampden's own country, destroying all that lay in his path. On one of these raids, with a mixed force of about 1,700 men, his cavalry penetrated as far as the village of Chinnor, lying at the foot of wooded hills only about six miles from Hampden House, and about one-third of the distance between Risborough and Watlington along the Lower Icknield Way. He there cut to pieces a small Parliamentary force that was retreating from Islip, but he did not absolutely destroy the village. Many houses in it, dating from before the raid, are still standing (though the oldest of all, an inn, has lately been destroyed), and the flint-faced church of St Andrew, containing a screen of beautiful simplicity, stands also. Hearing that a body of horse was seen descending the hill, probably from Stokenchurch or Radnage, Rupert, sending his infantry before him, intended to retire upon Oxford as usual, and he probably marched along the road passing through Crowel, soon to become the home of

Milton's friend, Thomas Elwood, and so through Lewknor.

But the horsemen that Rupert had seen descending from the Chiltern plateau into the Vale of Aylesbury were part of Hampden's own command moving to join him at Watlington, where he was lying at an inn for the night. One may easily imagine the course of the following day, June 18th, 1643. News of Rupert's presence at Chinnor reached Hampden during the night, and he at once devised a plan to catch Rupert's force, as though between the closing points of pincers. Before dawn he sent a messenger at full speed to Thame (only eight or ten miles distant) urging Essex, who was there with a considerable army, at all costs to send a large party down the river Thame to Chiselhampton bridge, where Rupert's one line of retreat to Oxford could be barred. The river there is narrow but deep, impracticable for the passage of 1,700 foot and horse retreating in confusion, and threatened from both sides. He himself would advance to the same point, thus enclosing Rupert in a trap from which there was no escape.

At sunrise he called for volunteers among his mounted troops, and all responded. All were his own men, eager to serve under his intelligent and daring command. The Green-coat infantry he left in Watlington, for his one hope was by speed to overtake Rupert on the way and drive him up against Essex. The

distance for the forces from Thame and Watlington to Chiselhampton bridge was about the same, and he had some reason to expect that, when his design was so clear and the time so urgent, even Essex might be stirred to move. That was his one mistake. Essex was more incapable of movement than a mountain, though faith prayed.

But Hampden as usual was ready. With his body of volunteer horsemen alone he sped through the summer morning along the road for about three miles. There he came to an open space of partly cultivated common just north of the little village of Chalgrove, which lies about half-a-mile back from the road, almost hidden in a crescent of trees, gorse and sedge. He found that Rupert, being now hard pressed and unable to retreat rapidly because he had overtaken his own infantry, had drawn up his cavalry as a covering rearguard among hedges and standing crops. A Colonel Gunter, commanding a squadron of Hampden's own men (Hampden never assumed a higher rank than colonel himself) charged too impetuously, apparently on the right, and was killed, his men being thrown into disorder and forced back. Now if ever was the moment for Essex to appear, threatening Rupert's left flank and rear, but no Essex came.

Longing for that relief, Hampden rallied the scattering dragoons, and the attempt proves his personal influence, for when men scatter in

retreat it is hard to induce them to face the enemy again, and Hampden had no infantry to fall back upon, as Rupert had. His hope was to delay the battle till Rupert's one gate of retreat should be cut. If only Essex stood planted in array across the narrow approach to the bridge! Then Rupert himself and a crowd of his disordered troops, both horse and foot, could be shot down or drowned in the stream, and Rupert's death or capture would deliver the King from evil counsellors who had not Rupert's enthusiasm or dashing courage. In the hope of holding the enemy to the ground, Hampden himself charged into the thick of the conflict. Perhaps he was pointed out by a notorious traitor who once knew him as a friend and had gone over to the other side. In any case he was conspicuous in his broad-brimmed black hat, his green tunic tied round the middle with a broad scarf, his cuirass or relic of armour, his gloves and high riding-boots of brown leather. At blank range someone, probably a mounted musketeer, aimed at him from behind with a flintlock, or perhaps a matchlock carbine, and a bullet (some said two bullets) pierced the top of his shoulder, breaking a bone and lodging deep in the flesh.

It was probably his right shoulder that was struck, for the loss of his right arm's use would at once render him helpless, as his left would be holding the reins, and we know that he turned helplessly away from the fight. One of his

own men, afterwards taken prisoner by Rupert's band, reported at the time :

He was confident Mr Hampden was hurt, for he saw him ride off the field before the action was done, which he never used to do, and with his head hanging down, and resting his hands upon the neck of his horse.

Riding thus lonely and helpless away, he is said to have made first for Pyrton, the home of his first wife ; but that is unlikely unless he had intended to work back to his own Greencoat infantry whom he had left in Watlington that morning. He seems from the first to have made for Thame, perhaps still in the vain hope of rousing Essex to action. By tradition he passed through the meadows and dykes to Great Haseley, which would be on his way to Thame, but about a mile from the river. Tradition also tells that, being stopped by water at one place, he put spurs to his horse and cleared it in spite of his pain and helplessness ; for he had always been a fine rider. Writers have assumed that the water was the river Thame, but the river was some distance off on his left, and there was no need to cross it on his way, since the wandering stream runs round the further side of the town. The water was probably one of the small streams or dykes draining into the river. There is another tradition that he was joined by his old and trusted friend Arthur Goodwin, who had been with him as a boy at Thame Grammar

School, was his colleague as Member for Buckinghamshire, and helped to raise his body of horse.

Perhaps they rode side by side into the town and stopped at the Town Hall. It was surrounded by a crowd of soldiers and townspeople, awaiting news of the battle. The only news was that Hampden's excellent scheme had failed. Essex as usual had been too late at Chiselhampton bridge; Rupert's mixed force had crossed it unopposed, and proceeded without molestation to Oxford, driving two hundred prisoners with them, there to be shamefully mocked along the High Street, as we learn from the record of an earlier occasion. For Oxford, being clerical, was of necessity contemptuously insolent to Puritan brothers in Christ.

Hampden, himself in great pain, was placed in a room at the inn, still pointed out by tradition, and the army surgeons held out some hope of recovery. There was a strong report, believed at the time, that the King sent his own surgeon in hope of saving the life of his most formidable enemy, as Hampden at the time was thought to be. Such generous action was not impossible, for Charles possessed most of a gentleman's qualities, excepting only honesty and the obligations of troth. But if, as was said, he had any hopes of winning Hampden to his side by generous treatment, he mistook his man. Even moved by gratitude, even to save

his life, Hampden would never have taken arms against the tradition of freedom.

The surgeons succeeded in extracting "a bullet" (we are not told of two), but presently, as was usual in the days before antiseptics were known, mortification set in, causing much pain. In that state he lingered for six days after the battle (till June 24th), and then died "as in sleep". The report of his last words as being a prayer for his bleeding country, and a prayer that the King might see the error of his ways, may be true, but such last words are easily invented at a deathbed. His faithful friend Arthur Goodwin was at his side till within a few hours of his death, and two days later, from Hampden House, he wrote to his daughter :

All his thoughts and endeavours of his life was zealously in this cause of God's, which he continued in all his sickness, even to his death. For all I can hear the last words he spake was to me, though he lived six or seven hours after I came away as in a sleep. Truly, Jenny, he was a gallant man, an honest man, an able man, and take all, I know not to any man living second. God now in mercy hath rewarded him. I have writ to London for a black suit, I pray let me beg of you a broad black ribbon to hang about my standard. I would we all lay it to heart that God takes away the best amongst us. I pray the Lord to bless you. Your ever dear Jenny, most affectionate father, Ar. Goodwin.

Equally just and significant was the estimate given in the *Weekly Intelligencer* when the news reached London :

The loss of Colonel Hampden goeth near the heart of every man that loves the good of his king and country, and makes some conceive little content to be at the army now that he is gone. The memory of this deceased colonel is such that in no age to come but it will be more and more had in honour and esteem ; a man so religious, and of that prudence, judgment, temper, valour, and integrity, that he hath left few his like behind him.

Arthur Goodwin himself attended the funeral on the morrow of Hampden's death. A procession was formed out of the soldiers in the neighbourhood, including a detachment of Hampden's own Greencoats. From Thame they would naturally march along the main road to Prince's Risborough. They marched bare-headed, with arms reversed and muffled drums, singing as they went the ninetieth Psalm :

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. . . . For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them [mankind] away as with a flood ; they are as a sleep : in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and

groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. . . . So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long ? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. . . . Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. . . . And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us : and establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

Sentences like these, translated from a noble Hebrew poem, perhaps still better known to us in the hymnal version beginning " O God, our help in ages past ", were sung as the martial procession of his soldiers and countrymen moved along the road and through the market place of Risborough. Then they climbed the steep hill of the Chiltern ridge either by the road up which motor cars are now tested, or by the better road leading up to the inn now called " The Pink and Lily ", and so past the end of Hampden Common and along the lane leading to the church. In either case they would cross and perhaps traverse part of the Upper Icknield Way, which is still a broad green lane, telling of warring savages and prehistoric traffickers wandering from tribe to tribe.

In the floor of the church, at a spot unmarked so that the enemy might not dig him up again, as they afterwards dug up his cousin Cromwell, they laid the man whom all had learnt to call " The Patriot ". The procession was formed

again, and it passed the pleasant gardens and Hampden House, then standing empty. As they passed, they sang verses from the forty-third Psalm :

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation : O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man. For thou art the God of my strength ; why dost thou cast me off ? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy ? . . . Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

So they sang, and as the sound of their singing died away down the hill, they left their beloved officer alone behind them in the silence of an unmarked grave. But as I sat that Sunday afternoon in his church beside John Masfield, more than two hundred and fifty years after that burial, I knew that somewhere near me lay the relics of a man who had done as much as any Englishman could to maintain the tradition of our freedom and save us from the despotism and foul oppression under which other great nations, even in Europe, have suffered and are suffering still.

From these thoughts and visions I was suddenly aroused by the words of the refined and scholarly clergyman, who in his sermon was preaching the solemn and divine duty of Passive Obedience to all who may be set in authority

over us. Then indeed I discovered the exact spot where his soldiers had buried Hampden, for I felt bones stirring just below my feet, and, with a joyful exaltation, I realized that from the life once inhabiting those very bones my own mother was descended.

Note on Hampden's Uniform. Portraits do not agree. Probably he wore the stout leather coat, buff or perhaps green, as green was the colour of his regiment. Probably in front it was covered with a steel cuirass or breastplate, and the back was covered by a thinner and smaller cuirass through which the bullet penetrated the right shoulder. The man who shot him, if a musketeer, would probably carry a matchlock, or if a cavalryman, a wheel-lock pistol. High authorities think Hampden would be wearing a triple-barred helmet, but I should think that would be too heavy for such a season, and the monument to him in Hampden church represents him as wearing a large broad-brimmed hat of soft felt. It is true that the monument was not designed till a century later, when helmets would be entirely out of use.

XXI

BEAUTY NO COMFORT

ALL my life I have been alive to the passion of beauty, whether of mountains, rivers, art or women, but in time of danger, anxiety, or hesitation I have found no delight or consolation in any beauty at all. That is true of most people. To Wordsworth nature's beauty was a passion of almost irresistible appeal, yet when he lay in a grove reclined, listening to a thousand blended notes amid birds and primroses and periwinkles, all his pleasure in nature was overwhelmed as he lamented what man had made of man. When Helena von Dönniges was awaiting the news of her noble-hearted lover Lassalle in Switzerland, she lamented that she was there in the loveliest scenery of the world but sought for its consolation in vain. Her story is told in her own memoirs and in George Meredith's *Tragic Comedians*.

When, during the Dardanelles campaign, I was sometimes housed in the *River Clyde* close up to Y Beach, I had laid out before me one of the most beautiful and historic scenes of the world. The broad river of the famous straits was swirling fast around me. Near by, on my right, stood Tenedos. Far away to the left gleamed the snow of the Mysian Olympus. Just

BEAUTY NO COMFORT

across the stream before me lay the sickle of brilliant sand where the Greeks once drew up their ships, and beyond them stood a steep mound which was Troy. Yet the beauty and history gave me no pleasure, no consolation in the booming and clashing conflict of death now tearing the rocks and shrubs upon the ancient peninsula, and crashing among the tents and sheds of W Beach, to which, indeed, the funnel and masts of our *River Clyde* served as sighting points for the big Turkish guns on the Asiatic shore.

XXII

THE HOLY SPIRIT

FROM youth up I have known the beauty of the English cathedrals, but in the summer of 1934 I saw the interior of Chester for the first time. As in most of our ancient churches, the architecture tells its own history and the various dates of its building. When I passed from the sunshine of the old city into the warm but subdued light of its red-sandstone columns and arches, I found that the evening service was proceeding and had just reached the place appointed for the anthem. The words, set by Samuel Sebastian Wesley to a sweet and tender melody in Mendelssohn's manner, were taken from the fifty-first Psalm, and in our translation they run, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me." Nearly the whole Psalm dwells upon purity of soul, and extols truth in the inward parts, and a broken and contrite heart as being better than outward ritual; but the responses that follow the Lord's Prayer at morning and evening service omit the words from the previous verse, and retain only the prayer, "Make clean our hearts within us; and take not thy holy spirit from us." So in the Roman Missal we read, "*Cor mundum crea in me, Deus,*" and in the following verse, "*Ne projicias*

me a facie tua : et spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me.'

. It is true that, in the last two verses of the poem itself, which were perhaps added by some inferior poet soon after the return of the Jews from the Captivity in Babylon, the prayer calls on God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and it falls away from the purely spiritual supplication for a clean heart and the holy spirit into the primitive propitiation of burnt offerings and the sacrifice of young bullocks upon the altar, just as though no advance had been made from the barbaric ritual which still lingered in the Homeric religion. Yet, only three verses before this, the poet had declared that God has no delight in burnt offerings, and that the accepted sacrifices are entirely spiritual. This may be an instance only of those unconscious contradictions that occur when the ancient forms of religious magic and the propitiation by blood, as in the Catholic sacrifice of the Mass, are slowly evolving into the inward and spiritual worship. To quote the Roman Use again, the change is there emphasized : "*Holocaustis non delectaberis. Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus : cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.*"

So I stood in the comforting glow of immemorial red-sandstone wrought by medieval workmen into the columns and arches of an old English church consecrated to Christ, who had been executed by Jews and Romans nineteen centuries before, and I listened to a recent

English composer's music set to suit the words of a spiritual petition uttered by an unknown Jew some two or three centuries before the Athenians designed the arts imitated in parts of this as of all our cathedrals. It was a strange combination of ages and peoples. What connection could there be between such generations of time and such distances of space? Yet the familiar words were still a petition of urgent necessity for all the generations of mankind in the rushing stream of life. Above all it was a necessity for a man like myself, whose life at the best could not last much longer, and from whom the holy spirit might be taken, little by little and year by year, till death should quench it.

I have already quoted the Athenian "Master of them that know" who taught his pupils that "an energy of spirit along the lines of excellence is the highest possible happiness"; and he added that it is only to be won in "a complete life"—a life complete in length and opportunity, as mine has been. I suppose he would have excluded from the highest happiness, not only the shortlived people who have not had time to develop or exercise their energy of spirit, but also that enormous majority of mankind who by birth, poverty, or monotonous labour, can never enjoy the best opportunities for health, knowledge and pleasurable associations. Christians might agree that it is possible for the slaves whom Aristotle accepted as the necessary foundation of civilized society, just as we accept

our working classes without much question or troublesome scruple as necessary for our civilization—it is, I suppose, just possible for them, too, to join in the Jewish poet's supplication. But that is hard and rare, and one can better understand the case of people whom, like myself, the shameless inequality of fortune has endowed with a life fairly complete in all that may supply conditions for the happy energy of spirit.

Nearly every Sunday in nearly every church we are told that the peace of God passes all understanding, and in their final blessing the clergy do their utmost to diffuse it to comfortable people and the poor alike. But the phrase is confessedly vague and the holy spirit of the Psalms and Responses must be something more definite, nor is the petition for the holy spirit a prayer for peace. Quite the reverse. Perhaps, merely as an illustration, one may discover the holy spirit's nature from instances of its loss, and this is readily perceived in the noblest creators of literature. Till he was about thirty-five the holy spirit dwelt in Wordsworth, or was but rarely absent. He lived to be eighty, but after thirty-five it returned to him so seldom that a sudden glimpse of it makes us start as at an apparition of the dead. He himself feared that the vision would fade into the light of common day. Before he was fifty he felt it was gone, and on the stepping-stones of the river Duddon he observed that declining manhood

learns to note the sly and sure encroachments of infirmity. It was an infirmity, not only of the body but of a soul no longer illuminated. The holy spirit had been taken from him, and he was left half-conscious of its loss.

Still more piteous was the lamentation of Coleridge, who at one time was possessed by the holy spirit in full measure. He had drunk the milk of paradise long before he turned to opium as a substitute. He had flashed lightly along "o'er aery cliffs and glittering sands" :

Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide !

A "trim skiff" would not describe the Cunarder *Queen Mary*, but the fires of the poet's own little skiff were all put out, and it skimmed no more. The holy spirit had been taken from him, or returned only as a regretful sorrow for the past :

When we are old !
That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave,
Like some poor nigh-related guest
That may not rudely be dismiss,
Yet hath outstayed his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

His loving sense of nature's beauty remained, but in the midst of it he lingered, "the sole unbusy thing" :

Bloom, O ye amaranths ! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not ! Glide rich streams away !
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll ;
And would ye know the spells that drowse my soul ?
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.

The gods loved Keats and Shelley because they died young ; but in his dirge over Keats, Shelley foresaw with mournful accuracy the miserable state of anyone from whom the holy spirit has been taken. Of his co-equal in poetic genius who had died so fortunately young, he wrote :

From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain ;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

And Keats himself, from whom the spirit was never taken, could none the less behold in our common world " the weariness, the fever, and the fret " :

Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
Where palsy shakes a few sad, last grey hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre thin, and dies.

But, because they died young, the gods never took the holy spirit from Keats and Shelley. Nor was it taken from Byron, though he lived a few years longer. In passionate and ennobling action he strove to cling to it. He clung to it like Jacob wrestling with the angel, and at the

last it blessed the heroic soul confined in that maimed and outworn body. Amid thunder and drenching rain, lying helpless in a ramshackle cottage, surrounded by uninspiring acquaintances and a mob of the greedy and mutinous Greeks whose freedom he had come to win, he shouted, almost with his last breath, "Forward! Forward! Courage!—Follow my example—don't be afraid!"

There was a time when, almost every Monday evening at the Popular Concerts in old St James's Hall, I used from a cheap orchestra seat to watch Robert Browning in the stalls, usually near the more formidable countenance of George Eliot, who wore the look of Savonarola denouncing the frivolities of Florence. One cannot judge the presence of the holy spirit by a man's outward appearance, or we should have half our young undergraduates looking more and more like Shelley every day. But I used to wonder how that elderly gentleman, who seemed so dully commonplace, could be the same poet who thrilled me to the heart when first, looking to the Thames over the Christ Church meadows, I opened a volume of his own "Selections". What fresh perceptions of life he gave me! What bright visions of the past! What courage in facing this variegated world! What insight into the souls of men and women! With him the holy spirit lingered long, and up to the last at times it returned. But in the overloaded haystack^{of} of his thoughtful verses how hard it

often is to detect the gleam of its presence ! One must forgive a confusion of thought in the great minds who, in the midst of last century's religious revolutions, strove, with the devotion of a rearguard in retreat, to defend some poor relic of their shaken beliefs. We may sympathize and applaud. I cannot hope to express all that I owe to the holy spirit which once visited that elderly gentleman whom I watched listening to Joachim, Piatti, and the other musical heroes of fifty years ago. But for the inner light of the spirit I must turn from *A Death in the Desert*, and *Easter Day*, and even from *Saul* and *An Epistle of Karshish*, to *The Worst of It*, or *The Flight of the Duchess*, or *The Last Ride Together*, or *A Toccata of Galuppi's*, or *The Bishop orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church*.

Even to Goethe's noble mind and heart how often the presence of the holy spirit was denied ! In youth it dwelt within him, isolating his inner self from the multifarious interests that spring up and choke the soul. "From my youth onwards," he wrote in later years, "I have often found it true that, in our moments of greatest need, a voice calls to us, 'Physician, heal thyself !' And how often have I not sighed in pain, I have trodden the wine-press alone." That inner self, thus lonely and self-reliant, he says, was best realized in creative power :

For years this creative power never deserted me for a moment. When I reflected on this gift of nature, and found that it alone belonged to

me entirely and could never be encouraged or impeded by external forces, I chose to regard it as the very foundation of my whole being.

He delighted to believe it was part of the Divinity in Nature, working through him as its instrument, and under that divine influence he wrote, almost unconsciously, as though some holy spirit were guiding his pen, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, the original scenes of *Faust*, and many of his most beautiful songs and ballads. "Talent," he says, "is like virtue, one must practise it unseen like a dangerous secret." And, remembering the Psalm's petition for a clean heart, one may notice that, during his early years at the Weimar Court, when he took on himself almost all the public services together, was devoted to the care and protection of the common people, and for some years was passionately attached to the wife of one of the Court officials, he kept repeating a prayer for cleanliness, for purity of soul, for a clean heart—for *Reinheit*, as he calls it—as though in hope of clearing away the commonplace interests and rubbishy details that so easily beset us. One may recall the last verses of his noble poem on Schiller's death :

His spirit strode with powerful footsteps here
Toward the eternal True and Good and Fair ;
And like an empty show behind remained
The Commonplace that holds us all enchained.

Or, to give the famous couplet in its original language :

*Und hinter ihm, im wesenlosen Scheine,
Lag, was uns Alle bändigt, das Gemeine.*

To Goethe the inexplicable inspiration of genius was indeed the holy spirit. In an early ode, composed in the unrhymed metre of short lines which he sometimes adopted, especially in youth, he appeals to genius never to leave him. It is called "A Wanderer's Song in Storm" (*Wanderers Sturmlied*), and it begins :

Whom thou dost not abandon, Genius,
Over his heart no rain, no storm,
Can breathe a fear.

Whom thou dost not abandon, Genius,
Against the clouds of rain,
Against the storm of hail,
He will sing,
As the lark sings on high.

So the poet continued, fearlessly wandering among all the assaults and threatenings of nature—fearless and with heart aglow, provided only that the holy spirit of genius were not taken from him. His long and arduous life gave him the accumulated wisdom of energetic experience. He retained his generous and tolerant disposition, his fine intellect and insatiable curiosity in search of nature's open secret, his understanding of the young, and his power of passionate love for women. Even his prolonged investigations into what, in a moment of disillusionment,

he called "the charnel house of science", were conducted with the insight of an imaginative poet. But the holy spirit of that secret self reappeared only seldom, sometimes not for years together, and it was only when the holy spirit unconsciously possessed him that he wrote the lasting and universal words which restored the poet of *Faust*.

One might go on to mention other great poets, even of our own times, in whom the spirit has moved now and again, only to sink in the collapse of deliberated and manufactured verse. How much more highly the present generation, which affects to despise Tennyson, would think of him if he had written nothing but "The Lotos Eaters", "Maud", a few brief lyrics, and the finest cantos of "In Memoriam"! And Swinburne—if only he had died after the first "Poems and Ballads" and "Atalanta" had appeared, what a marvel of poetry even our young might think we had lost! But the holy spirit is like the wind, blowing where it listeth, and poets can only join with common men in the prayer that it be not taken from them.

Equally lamentable as to poets and writers of genius is the loss of the holy spirit to men of action. Samuel Johnson, as instances of "The Vanity of Human Wishes", deplored that loss in a great soldier, side by side with its loss in a great satirist:

Down Marlborough's cheeks the tears of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driveller and a show.

That the victor of Blenheim and the discoverer of Laputa should come to this was sad beyond the depths of pity, but the maudlin Duke in his palace, and the crazy man of genius, exhibited in his Deanery to public view for a scanty fee, were probably only half-conscious of the overwhelming change. More grievous still is the state of one who feels that the holy spirit is gradually sliding away, and no prayer can bring it back. Wretched also is he from whom the exercise of the spirit's energy has been taken by force or fate. One thinks of Hannibal, driven from the city he alone might have saved, to wander about from Antiochus to Prusias, from one petty Asiatic Court to another, from one desperate hope to new despair, until he needs must end his life. Or of Napoleon, ringed by the sea upon a tiny crag, while he impotently meditated his power to conquer the world. Or one may think of a genius in national finance unable to secure re-election to Parliament when his powers were most needed. How often, in Cheltenham or Bedford or Bath, one may observe, drowsing in the armchair of a Club, or meandering over the golf-links, an unknown hero who has once held Imperial sway over a vast and turbulent province! Once in Oxford I knew an Indian Civil Governor whose chief present interest in life was to see that all the clocks in his house struck in unison. Here are the tears of things; here the fortunes of mortality touch the mortal heart.

Thought is quick, and these were the instances that chivied through my mind as I stood that afternoon in the rose-red cathedral waiting for the evening service to end. But to realize the poignant earnestness of the Psalmist's petition one does not need to be a prophet, a poet or a general—or even a politician. In my own mind the words, set to that sweet and tender music, have been re-echoing ever since. It is not in the vain hope that I may not lose the bodily delights that once were mine—to walk mile after mile without counting the number, to climb lonely hills, or to ride all day in companionship with a familiar horse. Such hope is already turning into regret. Rather I should pray not to lose the holy spirit that sheds a sudden joy over the first glimmer of morning, or at the sight of distant mountains, as when I saw the peaks of the Caucasus rising like the crystal battlements of heaven above the verge of the Ukrainian steppes ; and again, not to lose my clinging affection for my own country as I approach the northern fells and hear the northern dialect, or pass into the grey and yellow villages of the south, and unawares perceive the smell of its woods and heaths, alive with dear associations, or catch the first gleam of the sea from the top of the southern downs.

But the gifts of the holy spirit are far beyond mere emotions, however delightful and inspiring. They are akin, as we saw, to the inspiration of poets—an inexplicable visitation always resulting

in production. And so all fine emotion must result in action—action perhaps of beneficence, perhaps of strife. Take a poem of Heine's in "Harzreise" (1824). He is telling a little girl who questions his belief in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and he tells her that once as a child he believed in God the Father who made the beautiful earth and the beautiful race of man, and set the courses of sun, moon, and stars. As he grew older and got more understanding, he believed in God the Son who revealed to us Love and for reward was crucified by the people, as always happens. Then he goes on :

Now that I am full grown

And have read and travelled much,
My heart is full, and with all my heart
I believe in the Holy Ghost.

He has wrought the greatest miracles,

And far greater does he still ;
He shattered the castles of tyrants,
And broke the chains of the slave.

He heals up the deadly wounds,

And renews the ancient right ;
All mankind, born equal,
Are a generation of nobility.

He scares away the evil mists

And dark cobwebs of the brain
Which spoil our love and joy
And mock us day and night.

The Holy Ghost has chosen
A thousand knights well armed
To carry out His will,
And has endued their souls with courage.

Their dear swords flash,
Their splendid banners wave ;
Ah ! my little dear,
Would you not gladly see such gallant knights ?

Look at me, then, dear little one,
Kiss me and look me straight in the eyes,
For I myself am one of them,
A knight of the Holy Ghost.

The first call upon a knight's service has too often been a call to strife, and we know from the words of the great Jewish poets how often the holy spirit may drive a sensitive and pitiful mind to outbursts of strife and violent indignation. In their finest form we see it in some words of Isaiah, such as Chapter lix., beginning : "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened," though in this poet's case the passion of indignation is interspersed with exquisite passages promising peace and hope, as in Chapter lxi., beginning : "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Then comes Jeremiah, bursting with such a

torrent of indignation that it had to overflow into the Book of Lamentations. Among the lesser Jewish poets Amos is an instance of patriotic indignation, and Nahum sounds a battle-cry of rage.

• We English, too, have been granted knights and prophets in whose hearts the holy spirit of indignation burned. Think of Swift and the *Drapier's Letters*, wrung from him by the misery of Ireland. An intimate friend (I think it was Sheridan) said of him: "It fevered his blood, it drove him at times half frantic with furious indignation, it sunk him at times in abysses of sullen despondency, it awoke in him emotions which in ordinary men are seldom excited, except by personal injuries." Or read his *Modest Proposals for Preventing the Children of Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents and Country, and making them beneficial to the Public*: "Fatten them up for the Dublin market; they will be delicious roast, baked, or boiled."

Or read once more Carlyle's *Latter Day Pamphlets*, published in the very middle of last century to shatter the complacency of the Victorian Age. Read again Ruskin's *Munera Pulveris* and the many volumes of *Fors Clavigera*. Or read the Prefaces of Bernard Shaw, our present-day major prophet. Read, for instance, the Preface to *John Bull's Other Island*, or the Preface to *Major Barbara*, called *First Aid to Critics*. Upon such noble and unusual natures

as Swift, Carlyle, Ruskin and Bernard Shaw, the holy spirit has descended as in tongues of fire, just as the Holy Spirit descended upon the heads of the first Apostles, accompanied by a mighty rushing wind, and enabling them to speak in languages that every race of the known world could at once understand. Even so, all the peoples that possess anything to be called a language can easily understand the holy spirit expressed by Dickens, Galsworthy, Shaw and Wells. Look at the bookstalls in every railway station on the Continent or in Scandinavia, and you will learn that the speech of the holy spirit is everywhere comprehensible, especially when it expresses righteous indignation and prompts to such a revolution in human thought as was accomplished by the early utterances of Christianity.

So far I have regarded the holy spirit as inexplicable inspiration in the case of poets, blowing where it lists, and apparently neither to be controlled nor summoned at will, even by the greatest poets themselves. And in the case of prophets it has appeared as righteous indignation called up by the sight and sound of evils in their surrounding world. We who are neither poets nor prophets may yet to some extent share in the beauty and penetration such as the poets have perceived and illustrated, and we may be moved by a similar indignation to that of the prophets in our own world. But there is another part of the ancient Jewish

petition which one may suppose is also open to all mankind: "Create in me a clean heart"; "Make clean our hearts within us." The demand is no new thing. In the initiation into the religious mysteries at Eleusis, the applicant, before he was received, was carefully washed with bran and various unguents, and then was raised up into a purer state as he repeated the solemn words: "I have escaped from evil; I have discovered the better way." And in that profound work, *Marius the Epicurean*, too little now remembered, Marius in a Home of Spiritual Rest upon the hills near Tusculum found his soul filled with a calming sense of purity.

Too seldom in my long and tumultuous life have I found that peaceful purity, but once at all events it was mine as I walked in the strength of young manhood through woods and mountains, along the course of swift-flowing rivers on the way from Shrewsbury to Dolgelly, and slept at an unfrequented inn, encompassed by the very spirit of purity such as one may feel in Milton's "L'Allegro", beginning: "Hence, Loathèd Melancholy!" and pursuing one after another the loveliest pictures of country life as it may appear to the clean and purified spirit before bodily lusts have invaded it. I have felt it again in a beautifully simple Guest House at Cornell University, upon the edge of its high plateau, looking to distant hills across the long lake far below. Too seldom in our hastening

life come those intervals of cleanliness and peace, and hardly have our souls begun to take their rest when we hear that still, small voice demanding: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" We are torn from the welcome isolation of the desert and driven by the spirit far away to some tumultuous scene of perilous and discordant life, as Elijah was driven to Damascus.

Intervals of abstraction from the world—intervals of spiritual cleansing, "Retreats", as the Churchmen call them—may be one way of retaining hold upon the holy spirit. But there may be another way: to wrestle with the angel until the breaking of the day, even though the body and soul shrink and be put out of joint, as we call to the spirit not to leave us until he gives us his blessing. Even so, in a first, very simple, petition, I would pray to the holy spirit not to leave me lest at any time I should cease to throb at the sound or memory of great literature or great music, or at the sight of supreme art. Let me not cease to burn with love for human beauty, or cease to cry, like Faust, to the moment of fleeting exaltation: "O stay, thou art so fair!" Or cease to feel life suddenly intensified in more abundant power, just as the old Greeks had a saying that a man in moments of crisis may become "greater than himself"—greater than he usually is. That is a kind of intoxication such as many writers seek from wines and spirits, or even beer. And in passing one may notice that in the myth

of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the early Apostles, their friends and acquaintances thought they were all drunk with wine, though it was but the third hour of the day (nine o'clock in the morning).

Those are simple prayers, but I would add a petition more profound. Let me not cease at times to be conscious of an internal spirit—a being inexplicable, something so deeply inter-fused with our inmost nature that it seems to exist as our truest self, a spirit sensitive to outward events and all the feelings of joy and pain, which it sums up in memory as the record of self, but which none the less dwells apart, unknown, inscrutable, not to be touched or analysed by the powers of reason or imagination. Perhaps it is the very soul, and if the sense of its existence visits me no more, I shall know that the holy spirit has been taken from me, leaving me dead as a corpse.

Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life.

Custom ! Let us remember Hamlet's terrible phrase, "That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat, Of habits devil." "Custom heavy as frost and deep almost as life." How would it be if, tied down by custom, one settled into complacent ease and listened without rage to the enumeration of the wrongs and cruelties that now torment the world—the brutalizing

suppression of thought and speech, the torture of prisoners either to extort treacherous confessions, or just for the jailer's fun, as our sportsmen torture birds and animals for fun ; the capture and breeding of slaves for sale ; the eternal injustice of poverty ; and all the other abominations that I myself have witnessed in a life now coming to an end.

A few years ago, living in monastic solitude among the Chiltern Hills, like Elijah on Mount Horeb, I made a set of verses called " A Prayer in Spring ", and they concluded with the following lines :

And here I pray,
If prayer fulfil itself as a fateful dream,
For obdurate steel to encompass every part
Of coward in my soul, that so I may
Admit no courtesy alluring me to abate
Rage into acquiescence, never deem
Tolerance aught but treason's utmost crime,
Swim not with specious friends in the yielding stream,
But stand unmoved by compromise as fate,
Turn from the forward course no more than time,
Speak at sword's point with the enemy at the gate,
And with a perfect hatred hate.

A prayer for perfect hatred may seem a strange petition to the holy spirit. Yet, after all, one should always, I suppose, pray for the power most opposite to one's natural weakness, and my natural weakness is tolerance, politeness, moderation, a judicial benevolence or

sympathetic understanding towards the atrocious enemy. I can even understand Hitler, and feel a stupid tolerance of Mussolini. So I can only repeat the prayer in terrified apprehension lest the torpor of old age and comfort should take from me any single one of the holy spirit's gifts ; lest then it might be said of me, as many years ago I said of a certain rising politician :

Behold him soon, live mummy of his past,
Adept for honours, dead to honour's call,
To Ministerial seats descending fast,
While conscious Ministers applaud his fall ;
Alas for resolutions doomed to pave
The infernal surface that he treads upon !
For now his soul lies mouldering in the grave
And his body goes marching on.

Colleague of cruelty, mouthing mercy still,
Coercion's helpmate, to coerce afraid,
He murdered freedom half against his will,
And kissed the holiness he had just betrayed ;
Cajoling enemy, half reluctant knave,
A crossbred hypocrite, Pecksniff's bastard son,
For now his soul lies mouldering in the grave
And his body goes marching on.

Last stage of all : he shares the tyrant's fate,
Sees virtue from afar and knows it lost,
Knocks at the golden door and knocks too late,
Expelled from glory where he sought it most ;

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Peace, mercy, justice, resolutions brave,
Love for mankind and freedom—all are gone,
For now his soul lies mouldering in the grave
And his body goes marching on.

Rather than share a fate so much more
hideous than any imaginable Hell, have I not
reason to implore that the holy spirit be not
taken from me ?

XXIII

DEATH'S LOSSES

CARLYLE in old age suddenly realized that the time was soon coming when he would see the stars no more. Certainly it was an overwhelming thought for a man whose mind had always been open to the awe of immensity. Here was the passing man of genius being whirled along upon a speck of the Universe whose myriad lights he could just perceive and even calculate in their courses. There they shone, moving through space at unimaginable speed. He could actually see thousands of them, and he was told another Universe might be discovered though to him invisible, and the discovery seemed unnecessary. Within a few million miles he could even measure the distance between some of those pin-prick stars. He knew the ancient names given to many of them, and he had come to feel a kind of familiarity with them under such names as Canopus, Arcturus, and the Pleiades—stars to which Ulysses set his helm. And now, within a few little days or months of time he should never see any of them again for ever. It was a thought of immeasurable loss and sorrow.

Not being endowed with Carlyle's astronomical and imaginative nature (in his early years

he applied through Francis Jeffrey for a post as astronomer in Edinburgh),* I may try to count over the other sights, sounds and feelings which I shall most regret when death will deprive me of them. Naturally, I should put first the love and friendship that have been mine in succession or simultaneously during nearly four-fifths of a century—friendship with many men and women whose presence has been a joy, especially if they have been working in agreement with me for some fine object, such as conflict against tyranny, cruelty, or political wrongs. For active companionship in that warfare is the very bond of friendship. And love for women, founded upon similar aim, has been reduplicated by physical passion. The mere names of those who have roused me from my natural torpor and easy acquiescence are too many to be here enumerated. Even at my age their mention would be too personal. Some are forgotten even by myself, but many survive in memory, and some in life, both young and old, to be my chief regret when I come to die and leave them.

But beyond that high and often passionate companionship in conflict for some great purpose, what shall I miss most, and most regret leaving, when I lie still conscious but hear the preparations for my burning and the partition of my few belongings already in hand, like the building of a gallows at night? Certainly it is the

* January 11th, 1834. See D. A. Wilson's *Carlyle*, Vol. II, p. 351.

beauty of this little earth herself, and the varied skies under which she appears to spin. But here again, I shall regret departure most when I recall the hours of high and difficult activity which her limited surface has afforded me for walking, riding, swimming, sailing or rowing a boat, however small, breaking through new forests, climbing remote mountains, or moving down rivers renowned for ancient associations, or through African swamps of deadly attraction. I have known places in Ireland, the Caucasus and Switzerland, where it seemed impossible to leave the beauty of the scene, and yet I have found it difficult to join in the quiet poet's satisfaction in only standing and staring. Something breaks in upon the natural love of beauty, ease, and torpor. As the Lord says in excuse for the presence of Mephisto in the world: "Man's activity all too easily begins to drowse, he soon begins to love an unconditioned rest; So I am glad to give him that companion at his side, Who stings and works like leaven and must create as the devil may."

Some such restless power has always been rousing me to discover what lies on the other side of the hill or promontory, or what kind of people are living in those bright spots of light that shine upon the purple hillside of a Yorkshire moor. I cannot otherwise explain the restless urge which compels me always to go forward and seek out a way, unless indeed the devil had intended me for a British General. But even as

a lonely wanderer, I have known pleasure in unstrapping the netted hammock slung between two thin pines, in rolling up the pack, and walking myself warm as the sun was just appearing above the mountain edge. At such moments I have sometimes imagined myself as good a guide as a horse or dog for a platoon of the Army in difficult country, and that is a joy which death must end.

I cannot explain why even the sight of mountains, near or distant, has always filled me with joy. They might be the totally bare and barren cliffs near the coast below Loanda in Central Africa, where rain never falls ; or the deep valleys of the Caucasus between Tiflis and the savage Lesghian ranges ; or the lines of hills beyond the brown bogs of Ireland ; or just the rocky, grassy mountains of the Lake country, where " my people " once lived with their sheep. It does not make much difference so long as they are mountains. Some scientific German traced our love of mountains to dim memories of a mother's beneficent breasts. But though that explanation is not nearly so ridiculous as the jargon about *Œdipus complexes*, it does not hold good ; for the spiritual or romantic love of mountains that possesses some of us has been known for barely a century and a half, and before that time nearly all human babies had been suckled at mothers' breasts, and yet mountains were regarded as evil, dangerous, the haunts of dragons and unfertile monstrosities. In the

valley of the Arve at Sallenches, inspired by Ruskin, who was staying at the same old inn, I remarked to an old villager upon the beauty of the Mont Blanc range, which may best be seen there just before sunrise, and he replied with the ancient wisdom of mankind: "Non, non ! On pouvait y attraper la mort." But I have never had to climb mountains for my living, as the villager had, nor to feed sheep and goats upon them ; and so my love of them remains unaltered till death shall end it.

In contrast there has been the joy of watching the spires of St Mary-in-the-Strand and St Clement Danes, an hour before or after summer sunset, on my way to work in Fleet Street ; and the yet greater pleasure of looking up under a sky still white in the north as I returned from the old *Chronicle* office with a satisfied feeling of having finished work for one more day, at all events not so badly, as my editor Massingham might say. All that is over now. The world goes on without our paper's guidance of savage indignation, and when I am dead no human soul will care whether the work was badly done or well, neither the great editor nor I.

The inexplicable pleasure of sharing the thoughts and words, and even the very personality of writers and poets, historians and philosophers, who have written down in various lands and various languages words that I can partially understand—that, too, must be left behind. Charles Lamb writes: "We may

recollect what Dr Johnson said to Garrick, when the latter was making a display of his wealth at Hampton Court: 'Ah, David, David! these are the things that make a death-bed terrible.' " And Lamb himself foresaw with grief the time when he should no longer read his noble folios and the Elizabethan dramas as they were first written and published. But what I shall regret will not be the books—no, not the whole British Museum Library—but the many living spirits inside them that live for ever dispersed through the world, and have once lived in my own personal self. Hamlet, Prometheus, Sancho Panza, Mr Pickwick, and some score or two of others, who have entered into my being, and, so far as I am concerned, will die and be buried in my grave.

I am one with all the great literature I have known. Compared with a scholar's knowledge, mine is small and fugitive. But such writings as I have known and admired and loved are part of myself. I cannot separate them from myself. It is hard to think that all the knowledge and appreciation that I have gathered up in the passing years should perish in the waste of nothingness. If the poets and writers could realize the loss they themselves will suffer at my death they would join in my regret, for when I die some infinitesimal part of their genius and fame will be lost for ever.

And there is great music also to be lost; and the joy in buildings and painting and

sculpture in unity with great buildings. And there is my peculiar pleasure in what is called bad art ; for it is pleasurable to reflect upon the ages when what critics now call the worst art—late Renaissance, Rococo, Early Victorian, or what they will—was once upheld as the very best that art could ever hope to produce. And then there is music, whether Bach, Beethoven, Schubert songs, or whatever else I can hear with pleasure and some understanding, or the succession of peculiar sounds in which the young now seek pleasure and profess understanding—all will be lost to me, and I shall never know to what development music, like literature, may be tending. It is enough to make any death-bed terrible to realize that all these ecstasies of life must soon be left in silence for ever, nor shall I follow knowledge like a sinking star.

I know very well that I have no right to use the word “ I ” of my poor relics of bones and flesh in a grave or a furnace. But even philosophers have fallen into that idle anticipation, and Henry Kingdon Clifford had inscribed on his tomb at Highgate the self-contradictory words, “ I am not, and care not.” No one can say “ I am not ”, nor could a non-existent “ I ” care or not care. If I were for the moment allowed to be as unphilosophic as the philosopher Kingdon Clifford, I should say that as a corpse in the grave I should most regret health.

If on the other hand I reflect upon the things of which I shall be glad that death rid me, I

find them few. Up to the present year (1935) I have hated only two men with dangerous violence, and both have anticipated murder by dying. At present I feel no violent hatred towards anyone, except of course a violent political hatred of foreign dictators for their cruelty. But it would be cowardly to rejoice in leaving them on earth when one may always hope from day to day to hear of their deaths in the course of nature.

As a relief from utter poverty I might welcome death, though I can hardly imagine a poverty so abject that I could not put up a fight for life against it. I suppose I ought to welcome death as an escape from overwhelming wealth in the same manner, but I cannot speak upon that from actual experience.

"As goods increase, they are increased that eat them," said the Hebrew proverb, and I can well imagine such petty trouble in the management of property and retainers, horses, cattle, and sheep, all liable to various diseases, to say nothing of spendthrift sons and flyaway daughters, that I should be quite glad to die out of them all. Still, the things that I should really rejoice to leave when I go to the grave are small and few. Prolonged ill-health would certainly be one of them, but even including ill-health, the balance inclines rapidly and deeply to the other side. "Oh my, I don't want to die! I want to go 'ome! I want to go 'ome!" sang our bravest in the Great War.

DEATH'S LOSSES

“Dogs! Do you want to live for ever?” cried Frederick the Great to his men, at the disastrous battle of Kunersdorff; and if they had freely replied, they would have said, “Yes, your Majesty, if you please, that is exactly what we do want!”

XXIV

COLOPHON

IN old books, dating from the sixteenth, seventeenth or early eighteenth century, one may find on the last page an engraved design called the Colophon, signifying "The End". The origin of the word was formerly traced to a tradition that the cavalry of the Asiatic Greek town of Kolophon, near Ephesus, could muster a cavalry force that always put an end to a battle. But this explanation seems to have been a myth, perhaps invented by the officers of the Kolophonian horse. The Greek word, apart from the name of the little town, simply meant the summit or top of a thing, and as everything, especially every art, declines when the highest point has been reached, it came to signify the culmination and so the end, much as we speak of the crisis in fever.

The Colophon at the end of a book served as our title page and generally included the name of the author, publisher or printer, the date, and a brief and pious motto, often in Latin, wishing well to the book, its readers, the world, and even to the author's soul. It was further adorned with elaborate scrolls and heraldic flourishes like an old coat of arms, to make it look important or even aristocratic. Following

the eulogy which I should choose for my tombstone: "He touched nothing from which he did not strip the ornament"—I will omit the scrolls and counterfeits of nobility, and simply inscribe this little book of reflections with a Colophon, meaning the end.

Even apart from his poetic genius, which was revealed only at intervals, it is always tempting to quote from Goethe, whose life was so long, so active, and so varied in interest. Speaking to his friend and secretary Eckermann, as they drove one afternoon from Weimar down by the little river Ilm, he observed "with great cheerfulness":

At my age (he was then seventy-five) one must of course sometimes think of death, but the thought never gives me the least uneasiness. For I am convinced our spirit is a being of indestructible nature. If I work on incessantly till death, nature is bound to give me another form of existence in place of this worn-out casing.

Writing a little earlier (1823) to a woman friend of whom he had heard or seen nothing for forty years, but who now urged him to save his soul in Christ, he said, we may be sure with equal cheerfulness:

To live long is to outlive much; men we have loved, hated, or regarded with indifference, kingdoms, capitals, yes, the very woods and trees we planted in our youth. We outlive ourselves, and are grateful if only a few gifts of

body and soul remain to us. We must acquiesce as best we may in all this transitory passage ; if only the eternal is present with us every moment - we do not suffer from the fleeting of time. My life long I have always meant honestly by myself and others, and have always looked to the highest aim in all my earthly endeavours ; you and yours have done the same. So let us work without ceasing while it is day for us. And as to the future let us remain untroubled. In our Father's kingdom are many provinces, and as He granted us so pleasant a habitation here, no doubt He will take good care of us both hereafter.*

In these passages Goethe was probably speaking and writing with his accustomed irony, for he tells us that when people began talking of God and heaven he was always so glad to hold his tongue. For myself at all events, I cannot imagine any celestial province or resting-place or mansion that I should care to inhabit in comparison with this ancient little earth, in the main so beautiful, always so full of interest, and giving such scope for activity and the work upon which Goethe insists in both passages. Nor should I care to meet my friends or my enemies in any other sphere than this.

I should like to live at least another century in this world, if only to share or witness " the

* It is unfortunate that our Authorized Version should have translated the Greek word as " Mansions ", which suggests to all English people an expensive flat or a fine country house in a park plentifully stocked with fallow deer and other game. Perhaps " abiding places " or " rest-houses " would be less ambiguous.

gigantic clearances and the gigantic new constructions " which our prophet, Mr H. G. Wells, foresees so confidently. He tells us to realize that :

The civilizations and cultures, the laws, the political institutions, the economic methods, loyalties, unrealities, religions, poetical interpretations, that served to sustain us well enough in the slower and apparently stabler past, are working more and more discordantly and dangerously, but we lack the force of mind and will to essay the gigantic clearances and the gigantic new constructions upon which these omnipotent changes in our conditions insist.*

These gigantic changes may possibly come within the next fifty years. We can hardly estimate the gigantic changes effected by speed in moving from one part of the earth's surface to another, and by the growth of machinery that by mass-production can turn out shirts and stockings in greater numbers than would be required by all the bare backs and legs within the Empire. But much as I should like to see and share the vast changes that our prophet foretells, I have nothing like fifty years left to wait for them. Like Moses on Pisgah, I can only look far out upon that land of promise in which I dimly perceive a population of serviceable Robots setting machinery in motion, or hurrying along roads straight and hideous

* *New America and the New World* (1935), p. 10.

enough to please Mussolini and Bernard Shaw. I was going to call it the "Land of Milk and Honey", but perhaps the description would hardly be applicable, though much may be accomplished with the products of coal and petroleum.

I look forward to that salubrious upheaval with passionate curiosity, but unfortunately, it may be long in coming, like that "Fabian Blow" for which we were waiting so expectantly forty years ago. Mr Wells himself seems to abandon any immediate hope when he tells us that the "Way of Life is in human nature". Most of us grow so accustomed to our special Way of Life that we are unwilling to be persuaded or even forced out of it.

A few years ago I was ordered to revisit a part of East London already familiar to me, near the canal at Limehouse. The district had been condemned as uninhabitable, and I found the houses dilapidated, the roofs letting in the rain, rats and still more uncomfortable vermin abounding, but the inhabitants were strongly opposed to the intended change into new and clean "Artisans' Dwellings", some five or six storeys high. They asked, "How are we to get our little children up and down the stairs, and where shall we keep our pigeons?" Their "Way of Life" was to turn out the children to toddle about in the narrow streets, and they loved to keep pigeons in every scrap of backyard that lay behind the houses. Children on the

street and pigeons in the backyard were more important to them than the gigantic change which the prophet hopefully foretells. The same would be true of the dwellers in the innumerable decent little red-brick houses that are spreading out in every quarter round London and the great manufacturing cities of the Midlands and North. There is not an English man or woman who would not fight with backs to the front doors rather than abandon their Way of Life and their little homes, however monotonous and uninteresting.

Even more heartfelt would be the opposition of the highly educated or cultured classes to the great upheaval—the landowners, the University and Public School men, the professional classes, doctors, barristers, merchants, army and naval officers, and perhaps the bishops, deans, canons, and other clergy of all Christian denominations. In England these classes are particularly numerous, and as a rule their Way of Life is so comfortable that they have no desire to change it, except for a slightly more comfortable condition. It is not only to maintain their own comfort that they would oppose the “gigantic clearance”, but because they believe that upon them rests the maintenance of the freedom in thought and speech, the rules of good behaviour, the investigations of science, and even to some extent the love of art, learning, literature, and history, which we still inherit from the Way of Life in ancient Athens and Rome.

Within the last few years other great nations have undergone a gigantic clearance by way of Communism or Dictatorships. But it will be hard to make our professional and cultivated classes believe that such a clearance can be of advantage to themselves. The examples of Italy, Germany, and Russia will incline them rather to apprehend that they themselves will be the first to be cleared away. In this country, so tenacious of personal freedom, so unwilling to submit in their daily life to dictators or doctrinaires, I fear that fifty years will be too short for the approaching change. From this distance it all seems as great as the change that in the course of a thousand ages gave a kind of man the chance of seeing the last Dinosaur expire.

About that Dinosaur Mr Wells has an appropriate sentence: "Naturally, anything that is still alive must have muddled through thus far. I suppose that the last Dinosaur to survive thought it was muddling through quite nicely."* One suspects that an intensely conservative race like the English will go on muddling through quite nicely, and that is why I listen only with dubious admiration to the learned professors and doctrinaires who tell us so much about "planning". Most of these wise "planners" for our country's good appear to have forgotten the incalculable variety of men and women, though any Sunday afternoon

* *New America and the New World*, p. 33.

spent among the crowding audiences near the Marble Arch would remind them of our distinctive quality. For there they would find a large crowd listening to one speaker proving the existence of God, and another close by proving His non-existence; one speaker proclaiming Catholic truth, and another denouncing all religious doctrines as coagulated lies; one pouring curses on Capitalism as the source of all our miseries, and next to him another denouncing Socialism as a form of murderous robbery fit only for the gallows. Communism, Fascism, and even Douglasism also have their turns, and the shirts of the orators are red, black, or green. The sight is very inspiring, for it reveals the versatility of the English mind, and its serious interest in every form of thought. But it should suggest difficulties for the well-intentioned people who lay out abstract plans for the English future, in action, belief, or politics.

I am always attracted by a passage in *The Character of a Trimmer*, written by George Savile, First Marquess of Halifax, and published in 1700 :

For the earth of England (he says), though perhaps inferior to that of many places abroad, to him there is a Divinity in it, and he would rather dye than see a spire of English grass trampled down by a Foreign Trespasser; He thinketh there are a great many of his mind, for all plants are apt to taste of the soil in which they

grow, and we that grow here have a Root that produceth in us a stalk of English Juice, which is not to be changed by grafting or foreign infusion.

By foreign infusion he meant the Way of Life in France, but we of to-day might substitute the Way of Germany, Italy or Russia. And by that stalk of English Juice we cannot doubt he meant personal and political freedom in thought and word and deed. Hitherto we have kept the root of that stalk alive by watering it with the blood of many a cruel struggle, and I can only hope that, like Halifax, I should rather die than see it trampled down by any foreign or native trespasser.

Browning wrote three poems called "Pisgah-Sights", and after attempting to view the mixed future of mankind, he ends the first poem with the verse :

Man—wise and foolish,
Lover and scorner,
Docile and mulish—
Keep each his corner !
Honey, yet gall of it !
There's the life lying,
And I see all of it,
Only, I'm dying !

Certainly that is the gall of it. For a full-grown man like Browning, after a long life of varied experience and steady labour at his particular task, capable of the highest pleasures in music, sculpture, and other arts, appreciative

of the greatest ancient and modern literatures, surrounded by troops of friends, a conspicuous figure in every society, a child of his own century but looking forward with eagerness to the coming age, acquainted with passionate love and still capable of love—that such a man should fade out of life while his intellect and surplus energy still ranked high among the intelligent and energetic people of the world—that is the gall of it. For death cut him off from realizing the vision seen from his mountain height. Then came the blind Fury with th' abhorrèd shears, And slit the thin spun life.

It was all very well for Goethe to teach us that life is the finest discovery of Nature, and death is her “stroke of art (*Kunstgriff*) to gain much life”. To myself the waste in death is deplorable. Hitherto my own thin spun life has remained intact, in spite of the blind Fury's frequent attempts to slit it in wars, rebellions, and revolutions. I have suffered much in mind and body. Like Ulysses I have wandered far and known many peoples and their minds. I have already told my enjoyment of the beauties and terrors of mountains and deserts, the deep communion of joint endeavour with noble-hearted men and women, the joys of perceiving the splendour of the great arts expressed in poetry, music, painting and architecture. Like Faust and Peer Gynt, I have sought myself up and down the world in every society, but unlike them I have not found myself even in the loving

embraces of most lovable and constant women. For my ideal of personal happiness I must go back once more to the definition of the ancient Greek philosopher who, after long search to find the highest good for a man, discovered that it was merely the energy of the soul or mind, along the lines of the highest excellence possible for him. Further, he adds, it must come to him in a complete life. For one swallow does not make a spring, nor yet does one day.

The definition, if only I could fulfil it, would suit me very well. I have been visited by whole flights of swallows, enough to make a spring, and have known whole days of ecstasy and many days of happiness. So far as time for the "complete life" goes, I have nothing to complain of, being now in my eightieth year. For energies of soul and body I have been given and have taken many opportunities. I have refused only two, the refusal of which still weighs on my spirit, though, if I had accepted one, Polar bears would long ago have crunched my bones. Otherwise I have found the old philosopher's definition true. My greatest happiness has consisted in energy of the soul or mind along the lines of the highest excellence possible for me, and I, like everyone else, could imagine forms of excellence far higher than that. I should like to have been a great admiral, a great general, a great explorer, a poet, a musician, or, best of all, a great dramatist, for the dramatist's appeal to our minds, like a musician's,

COLOPHON

is immediate and effective. But circumstance and the want of the appropriate brain have compelled me to remain on the lower plane of war-correspondent, journalist, and writer of books in the form of essays.

Now that the end is inevitably near, I regret that it will destroy much that will remain for ever unknown—memories of love and hatred, of accomplishments and failures, of endeavours and disappointments, of resistance and yielding, of temperance and lust, of conflict and defeat, and of all manner of similar contradictions that make up the inner self of every living person, man or woman.

Amid this incalculable mingling of opposites and conflicting energies of soul and mind and body, between which three powers no definite distinction can be drawn, it is obvious that the search for the true self is vain, and all that is left is for me to follow the ancient fashion and to inscribe in the centre of my Colophon the brief Latin sentence of farewell :

AMICI ATQUE INIMICI
SEU MORTUI
SEU ADHUC VIVI
VALETE



INDEX

A

- "A.E." (George Russell),
quoted, 154, 164
 Agnes, St, 78
 Anthony of Padua, St, 79
 Aristotle, *quoted*, 93, 206,
 246
 Arnold, Matthew, *quoted*, 134,
 137, 167, 184
 Asquith, Herbert (Lord
 Oxford), 189
 Athenians, The, 36 ff., 76-7,
 241
 Augustine, St, 78

B

- Barnes, Bishop, 13, 79
 Barnett, Canon Samuel, 54
 Bastien-Lepage, Jules, 72 ff.
 Bax, Arnold, 158
 Bax, Clifford, 158
 Beethoven, 148, 158, 159, 164,
 233
 Benet, St, 78
 Bible, The, 7-8, 67, 177, 218-
 19
quoted, 97, 103, 141, 198,
 199, 222, 234
 Blaise, St, 77
 Blake, William, *quoted*, 167
 Botticelli, 68 ff.
 Brandan, St, 77
 Bridges, Robert, *quoted*, 170

- Brighton (quotation), 156
 Brooke (Robert Greville),
 Lord, 186, 187
 Browne, Sir Thomas, *quoted*,
 13
 Browning, Robert, 210 ff.
quoted, 11, 63-4, 170, 244
 Burns, John, *quoted*, 55
 Butler, Samuel, 98
quoted, 97
 Byron, 113, 124, (death) 210

C

- Cadets, The Queen's, 27, 44,
 45, 54
 Capek, Karel, 131
quoted, 121-2, 130
 Carlyle, 24, 53, 146, 219, 220,
 227
quoted, 30; (on Unem-
 ployed), 50; 95, 103,
 123
 Chance, Arthur, 29
 Clarendon (Edward Hyde),
quoted, 179, 185, 189
 Clifford, H. K., 233
 Cohen, Harriet, 158
 Coleridge, *quoted*, 162, 164,
 208
 Creevy, *quoted*, 156
 Cromwell, Oliver, 184, 199
quoted, 187-8
 Cyprian, St, 78

D

- Dickens, Charles, 47, 49, 123,
220
Dinosaur, 88-9, 242
Drinkwater, John, 174

E

- Eliot, George, 210
Eliot, John, 181
Epictetus, 85
Essex, General, 187, 190 ff.
Evangelicals, 2 ff., 56, 181

F

- Falkland, Lucius Cary, 184-5
Farrar, Dean, 82
Fraser, Lovat, *quoted*, 116
Frazer, Sir James, 79
Frederick the Great, 235

G

- Galsworthy, Ada, 111, 117
Galsworthy, John, 111 ff., 220
 memorial service, 111-12
 quoted, 119, 125-6
George IV, 116, 156
Gilkes, A. H., 17 ff.
 quoted, 23, 24, 28
Gillespie, Major H. J., 160
Goethe, 158
 quoted, 52, 86, 92, 103,
 211 ff., 222, 229, 237-8,
 245
Goodwin, Arthur, 195 ff.
 quoted, 197
Greeks, The, 31 ff., 80, 102,
 115, 117, 130, 173
Turkish War, 27, 31 ff.

- Greeks, modern qualities,
 41-2
 mysteries, 221
Green, Professor, T. H., 109

H

- Halifax, Marquess of, *quoted*,
 243
Hampden, John, 177 ff.
Hannibal, 215
Heine, *quoted*, 158, 217
Herder, Life of, 67
Herring, Professor P. T.,
 107-8
Hind, Lewis, 137
Housman, A. E., *quoted*, 152,
 153, 155

I

- Industrial England, 48 ff.
Ingram, Bishop, 81

J

- James, William, 153
Jameson, Storm, *quoted*, 60
Johnson, Dr Samuel, 81
 quoted, 214, 232
Juliana, St, 78
Justina, St, 78

K

- Kant, 102
Keats, 144 ff.
 quoted, 142, 209
Knight, E. F., 32

L

- Lamb, Charles, *quoted*, 231-2
 Lassalle, Ferdinand, 202
 Layard, Sir Austen Henry,
quoted, 102
 Leicester, 1 ff.
 Leo, Pope, 78
 Livingstone, David, 116
 Lucy, St, 78

M

- Maeterlinck, *quoted*, 146
 Manos, General, 34, 35
 Marcus Aurelius, Emperor,
 85, 124
 Martha, St, 78
 Masfield, John, 174 ff., 200
 Massingham, H. W., 27, 54,
 231
 Meredith, George, 87
 Millet, 14
 Milton, 178, 192, 221
quoted, 160, 161, 168, 169
 Montague, C. E., 91
quoted, 90
 Moser, E. B., 28-9
 Moss, Dr H. W., 26

N

- Napoleon, 215
 Nevins, E. B., my brother,
 18
 Nevins, G. H., my father,
 1 ff., 56, 65-6
 Nevins, Henry W., *quoted*,
 105 ff., 224, 225-6

- Nevins, M. E., my sister,
 5 ff.
 Nevins, M. J., my mother,
 4-5

O

- Otterbourne, Ballad of, 152
 Oxford, 17, 65-6, 68-9

P

- Pater, Walter, 68, 221
 Patrick, St, 77
 Paul, St, 152
quoted, 92
 Pericles, *quoted*, 37 ff.
 Ponsonby, Arthur (Lord), 5
 Pusey, Dr, 66, 181

R

- River Clyde, 202-3
 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel (pic-
 ture), 153
 Rupert, Prince, 187, 191 ff.
 Ruskin, John, *quoted*, 164,
 219, 220
 Ruth, 142 ff.

S

- Schiller, 212-13
 Seymour, William Kean,
quoted, 64-5
 Sharp, Cecil, 162
 Shaw, Bernard, 53, 88, 219,
 220, 240
 Shelley, 124
quoted, 167, 209

INDEX

Shrewsbury, 15 ff.

The Schools, 16, 21

Sidney, Philip, *quoted*, 169

Smillie, Robert, 121

Smith, Adam, 153

Smith, Sydney, *quoted*, 59, 60,

132-3, 136

Socrates, 77

Spartans, The, 130

Stoics, 84 ff.

Strachey, Lytton, 52

Suckling, John, *quoted*, 170

Swift, Jonathan, 123, 215,

219, 220

quoted, 155, 171-2, 185

Swinburne, Algernon, 214

quoted, 165, 166

T

Tennyson, 214

- *quoted*, 168-9

Times, The, quoted, 109

Tolstoy, 128

V

Victoria, Queen

funeral, 44 ff.

her Ministers, 46

her Age, 47, 53, 63, 172

Vincent, St, 77

W

Warwick, Sir Philip, 183-4

Wells, H. G., 220

quoted, 239, 240, 242

Wesley, Samuel Sebastian

(anthem), 204

Whitman, Walt, *quoted*, 61,

166

Wilhelm II, Kaiser, 45

Williamson, Hugh Ross, 174

Wordsworth, 202, 207

quoted, 76, 91, 92, 134, 139,

140, 163, 223

Z

Zeno, 85

RUNNING ACCOMPANIMENTS